HISTORICAL MANUAL

OF

ENGLISH PROSODY

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BY

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PREFACE

THE reception of the first two volumes of a larger work (since completed) on English Prosody suggested, to the author and to the publishers, that there might be room for a more compressed dealing with the subject, possessing more introductory character, and attempting the functions of a manual as well as those of a history   It did not, however, seem that the matter could be satisfactorily treated in extremely brief form, as a primer or elementary school-book   The subject is one not very well suited for elementary instruction , and in endeavouring to shape it for that use there is a particular danger of too positive and peremptory statement in reference to matters of the most contentious kind   Catechetical instruction has to be categorical , if you set hypotheses, or alternative systems, before young scholars, they are apt either to distrust the whole thing or to become hopelessly muddled   And the opposite danger—of unhesitating adoption of positive state-ments on doubtful points—must have been found to be only too real by any one who has had to do with education. Schoolboys cannot be too early, or too plentifully, or too variously supplied with good *examples* of verse ; but they

should be thoroughly familiar with the practice before they come to the principles.

To the Senior Forms of the higher Secondary Schools, on the other hand, and to students in those Universities which admit English literature as a subject, this function of it is quite suitable and well adapted, and it is for their use that this volume is planned (as well as for that of the general reader who may hardly feel inclined to tackle three large octavos)   An effort will be made to include everything that is vital to a clear understanding of the subject , while opportunity will, it is hoped, be found for insertion of some information, both of a historical and of a practical kind, which did not seem so germane to the larger *History*   It has been a main object with me in preparing this book, while reducing prosodic theory to the necessary minimum, but keeping that, to "load every rift " with prosodic fact , and I could almost recommend the student to devote himself to the Contents and the Index, illustrated by the Glossary, all of which have been made exceptionally full, before attacking the text

The work, like the larger one of which it is not so much an abstract as a parallel with a different purpose, cannot hope to content those who think that prosody should be, like mathematics or music, a science, immutable, peremptory, abstract in the other sense.   It will not content those who think—in pursuance or independently of such an opinion—that it should discard appreciation of the actual poetry, on which, from my point of view, it is solely based   It will, from another point, leave dissatisfied those who decline the attempt to reduce this poetry to

some general but elastic laws, and who concentrate them-
selves on the immediate musical or rhetorical values (as
they seem to them) of individual poems, or passages, or
even (as is not uncommon) lines   Nor will it provide,
what some seem to desire, a tabular analysis of every verse-
form in the language, for reasons explained in the proper
place (*v inf* p 336 *note*)   But, from past experience, it
seems that it may find some public ready for it , and it is
perhaps not wholly fatuous to hope that it may help to
create a larger [1]

                                    GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

EDINBURGH,
ALL SOULS' DAY,
    1910

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[1] *Note to Second Edition Christmas 1913* — The opportunity of this
second edition * has been taken to read the text carefully, and to correct
a certain number of errors of pen and press, connected more especially
with division of feet and quantification of syllables   How difficult it is
to avoid errors here, nobody who has not tried the matter on an extensive
scale can well conceive   Few more substantial alterations have been
found necessary , but I may mention here an addition to the evidence of
distinct, if clumsy, anapæstic metre in the mid -sixteenth century, which
I had not noticed when writing this book or my larger one   It is a
translation of the 149th Psalm, contributed to the "Old Version"
(1561–2) by John Pulleyne, Student of Christchurch, Archdeacon of
Colchester, and Prebendary of St Paul's   It may be found in the Parker
Society s *Select Poems*, and begins

                Sing unto the Lord with hearty accord
                    A new joyful song ,
                His praises resound, in every ground
                    His saints all among

            And of a third —BATH, *Sept* 1919

NOTE TO SIXTH IMPRESSION

It has so happened that the call for a sixth and probably, as far as the lifetime of its author is concerned, final edition of this book follows very shortly the death of the late Poet Laureate, as that followed the publication of his last and greatest poem, *The Testament of Beauty*. Mr Bridges was an almost lifelong friend of mine, and was good enough not to reject the admiration which at different times I expressed, publicly and privately, for his poetry, but in strictly prosodic matters my ideas were not always his To discuss the form of the *Testament* itself at length would be not only inconvenient here but out of keeping with the rest of the book It should be enough to say that the vehicle is a line of which, from different points of view, the base may be taken as either a heroic or an Alexandrine, manipulated so as to produce rather rhythm than metre. For instance

> To oust monarchic Latin from its iron throne

is an actual Alexandrine , while

> And on spread wings with clamorous ectasy

is an actual heroic whereas

> Blendeth with the old Selfhood wherefrom it sprung as thus

if you insist on recognised metre, will not very readily adjust itself to the norm of Alexandrine or even of fourteener That the whole, however, supplies a fine medium for the Lucretian majesty, though far from Lucretian religion, of the poem, few competent judges will deny

<div style="text-align:right">G S , Bath, May 10, 1930.</div>

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BOOK I

INTRODUCTORY AND DOGMATIC

CHAPTER I

PROSODY, or the study of the constitution of verse, was, not so long ago, made familiar, in so far as it concerned Latin, to all persons educated above the very lowest degree, by the presence of a tractate on the subject as a conclusion to the Latin Grammar   The same persons were further obliged to a more than theoretical knowledge of it, in so far as it concerned that language, by the once universal, now (as some think) most unwisely disused habit of composing Latin verses   The great majority of English poets, from at least the sixteenth century, if not earlier, until far into the nineteenth, had *actually composed such verses ,* and even more had learnt the rules of them, long before attempting in English the work which has given them their fame   It is sometimes held that this fact—which as a fact is undeniable—has had an undue influence on the way in which English prosody has been regarded , that it must have exercised an enormous influence on the way in which English poetry has been produced may be denied, but hardly by any one who really considers the fact itself, and who is capable of drawing an inference.

It was, however, a very considerable time before any attempt was regularly made to construct a similar scientific or artistic analysis for English verse itself   Although efforts were made early to adjust that verse to the complete forms of Latin—and of Greek, which is in some respects prosodically nearer than Latin to English,—

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although such attempts have been constantly repeated and
are being continued now,—it has always been impossible
for any intelligent person to make them without finding
curious, sometimes rather indefinite, but extremely palp-
able differences and difficulties in the way   The differences
especially have sometimes been exaggerated and more
often mistaken, and it is partly owing to this fact that, up
to the present moment, no authoritative body of doctrine
on the subject of English prosody can be said to exist
It is believed by the present writer that such a body of
doctrine ought to be and can be framed — with the
constant proviso and warning that it will be doctrine
subject, not to the practically invariable uniformity of
Science, but to the wide variations of Art,—not to the
absolute compulsion of the universal, but to the compara-
tive freedom of the individual and particular   The in-
quiries and considerations upon which this doctrine is
based will be found, at full, in the larger work referred to
in the Preface   In the first Book, here, will be set forth
the leading systems or principles which have actually
underlain, and do underlie, the conflicting views and the
discordant terminology of the subject, and this will be
followed by perhaps the most valuable part, if any be
valuable, of the whole—a series of selected passages, scanned
and commented, from the very beginning to the very end
of English poetry.   In the second, a survey will be given
of that actual history of the actual poetry which ought
to be, but has very seldom been, the basis of every dis-
cussion on prosody   In the third a brief conspectus will
be supplied of the actual opinions which have been held
on this subject by those who have handled it in English
The fourth will give, in the first place, a Glossary of Terms,
which appears to be very much needed , in the second,
a list of poets who have specially influenced the course of
prosody, with reasoned remarks on their connection with
it , in the third, a selected list of important metres with
their origins and affiliations ; any further matter which may
seem necessary following, with a short Bibliography to

conclude   The object of the whole is not merely to in-
culcate what seems to the author to be the best if not
the only adequate general system of English prosody, but
to provide the student with ample materials for forming
his own judgment on this difficult, long debated, often mis-
taken, but always, if duly handled, profitable and delectable
matter.

CHAPTER II

Classical
prosody
uniform in
Theory.

THE great difficulty attending the study of English prosody, and the cause of the fact that no book hitherto published can be said to possess actual authority on the subject, arises from the other fact that no general agreement exists, or ever has existed, on the root-principles of the matter [1] Classical writers on metre, of whom we possess a tolerable stock, differed with each other on many minor points of opinion, and from each other in the ways in which they attacked the subject   But they were practically agreed that "quantity" (*i e* the difference of technical "time" in pronunciation of syllables) and "feet"—that is to say, certain regular mathematical combinations of "long" and "short", quantity—constituted metre   They had indeed accent— the later Greeks certainly and the Latins probably—which was independent of, and perhaps sometimes opposed to, quantity, but except in what we call the ante-classical times of Latin and the post-classical times of both Latin and Greek, it had nothing to do with metrical arrangement They had different values of "long" and "short", but these did not affect metre, nor did the fact that in both languages, but especially in Greek, a certain number of

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[1] Or, it may be added, on its terminology, whence it results that there is no subject on which it is so difficult to write without being constantly misunderstood   It is perhaps not surprising that some people almost deny the existence of English prosody itself, and decline at any rate to take it seriously, while others talk about it in ways which half justify the sceptics.

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syllables were allowed to be "common "—that is to say, capable of taking the place of "long" or "short" alike The central system of prosodic arrangement (till the flooding of the later Empire with "barbarians" of various nationality and as various intonation and modes of speech broke it down altogether) remained the same. "Longs" and "shorts" in the various combinations and permutations possible, up to three syllables most commonly, up to four in fewer cases, and possibly up to five in still fewer, made up *lines* which experiment discovered to be harmonious, and practice adopted as such. These lines were sometimes used continuously (with or without certain internal variations of feet, considered equivalent to each other), as in modern blank verse , sometimes arranged in batches corresponding more or less to each other, as in modern couplet or stanza poetry

On the other hand, though English prosodists may sometimes agree on details, translated into their different terminologies, the systems which lie at the root of these terminologies are almost irreconcilably different Even the reduction of these systems to three types may excite protest, though it is believed that it can be made out without begging the question in favour of any one. *English not so*

The discord begins as early as possible ; for there are some who would maintain that "accentual" systems and "stress" systems ought not to be identified, or even associated It is quite true that the words are technically used [1] with less or more extensive and intensive meaning ; but definitions of each are almost always driven to adopt the other, and in prosodic systems they are practically inseparable. The soundest distinction perhaps is that *"Accent" and "stress."*

[1] It is inevitable, in dealing with this subject, that technicalities, historical and literary references, etc , should be plentifully employed. To explain them always in the text would mean endless and disgusting delay and repetition , to give notes of cross-reference in every case would bristle the lower part of the page unnecessarily and hideously Not merely the Contents and Index, but the various Glossaries and Lists in the Fourth Book have been expressly arranged to supply explanation and assistance in the least troublesome and most compendious manner But special references will be given when they seem absolutely necessary.

"accent" refers to the habitual stress laid on a syllable in ordinary pronunciation, "stress" to a syllable specially accented for this or that reason, logical, rhetorical, or prosodic purely

English prosody as adjusted to them

According to this system (or systems) English poetry consists of syllables—accented or unaccented, stressed or unstressed—arranged on principles which, whatever they may be in themselves, have no analogy to those of classical feet. According to the more reckless and thorough-going accentualists—the view is expressed, with all but its utmost crudity, in Coleridge's celebrated Preface to *Christabel*[1]— all you have got to do is to look to the accents Gooder advocates still have said that "accents take the place of feet" (which is something like saying that points take the place of swords), or that unaccented syllables are "left to take care of themselves" It has also been contended that the number and the position of accents or stresses give a complete and sufficient scheme of the metre And in some late forms of stress-prosody the regularity, actual or comparative, which used to be contended for by accentualists themselves, is entirely given up, lines in continuous and apparently *identical arrangement* may have two, three, four, five, or even more stresses. While yet others have gone farther still and deliberately proposed reading of verse as 'a prose paragraph, the natural stresses of which will give the rhythm at which the author aimed [2] Some again would deny the existence of any normal form of staple lines like the heroic, distributing them in "bars" of "beats" which may vary almost indefinitely

On the other hand, there are some accentualists who hardly differ, in more than terminology, from the upholders of a foot-and-quantity system They think that there is no or little time-quantity in English, that an English "long" syllable is really an accented one only, and an English short syllable an unaccented. They would not neglect the

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[1] See on this in Book III

[2] See the article in Glossary on "Musical and Rhetorical Arrangements of Verse," and Rule 41, *infra*, p 35

unaccented syllables , but would keep them in batches similar to, if not actually homonymous with, feet   In fact the difference with them becomes, if not one of mere terminology, one chiefly on the previous question of the final constitution and causation of "long" and "short" syllables   Of these, and of a larger number who consciously or unconsciously approach nearer to, though they do not actually enter, the "go-as-you-please" prosody of the extreme stressmen, the majority of English prosodists has nearly always consisted   Gascoigne, our first writer on the subject, belonged to them, calling accent itself "emphasis," and applying the term "accent" only to the written or typographical symbols of it , while he laid great stress on its observance in verse   With those who adopt this system, and its terminology, the substitution of a trochee for an iamb in the heroic line is "inversion of accent," the raising or lowering of the usual pronounced value of a syllable, "wrenching of accent," and so on. And the principal argument which they advance in favour of their system against the foot-and-quantity scheme is the very large prevalence of "common" syllables in English— an undoubted fact , though the inference does not seem to follow

•   The mere use of the word "unaccented" for "short" Its diffi culties and "accented" for "long" does no particular harm, though it seems to some clumsy, irrational, and not always strictly correct even from its own point of view, while it pioduces unnecessary difficulty in the case of feet, or "sections," with *no* accent in them—things which most certainly exist in English poetry   But the moment that advance is made upon this mere question of words and names, far more serious mischief arises   There can be no doubt that the insistence on strict accent, alternately placed, led directly to the monotonous and snip-snap verse of the eighteenth century   In some cases it leads, logically and necessarily, to denial of such feet as those just mentioned —a denial which flies straight in the face of fact Although it does not necessarily involve, it most frequently

leads also to, the forbidding, ignoring, or shuffling off of
trisyllabic feet, which are the chief glory and the chief
charm of English poetry, as substituted for dissyllabic   And,
further still, it leads to the most extraordinary confusion
of rhythms—accentualists very commonly, if not always,
maintaining that, inasmuch as there are the same number
of accented syllables, it does not matter whether you scan

$$- \quad \cup \quad - \quad \cup \quad - \quad \cup\cup \quad -$$
When | the Bri|tish war|rior queen |

iambically or

$$- \quad \cup \quad - \quad \cup \quad - \quad \cup\cup \quad -$$
When the | British | warrior | queen

trochaically,

$$- \cup \cup \quad - \cup\cup \quad - \cup \quad \cup \quad - \quad - \quad - \cup\cup \quad - \quad -$$
In the hex|ameter | uses the | fountain's | silvery | column

dactylically or

$$- \quad \cup \quad \cup \quad - \quad \cup\cup - \quad \cup \quad \cup \quad - \quad - \quad - \cup\cup - \quad -$$
In | the hexam|eter ri|ses the foun|tain's sil|very col|umn

anapæstically

Further still, and almost worst of all, it leads to the
enormities of fancy stress above referred to, committed by
people who decline to regard as "long" syllables not
accented in ordinary pronunciation

*and insuf
ficiencies*   But its greatest crime is its hopeless inadequacy, poverty,
and "beggarly elementariness"   At best the accentual
prosodist, unless he is a quantitative one in disguise, confines
himself to the mere skeleton of the lines, and neglects
their delicately formed and softly coloured flesh and
members   To leave unaccented syllables "as it were to
take care of themselves" is to make prosody mere singsong
or patter

Finally, it may be observed that, in all accentual or
stress prosodies which are not utterly loose and desultory,
there is a tendency to multiply exceptions, provisos, minor
classifications to suit particular cases, and the like, so that
English prosody assumes the aspect, not of a combination
of general order and individual freedom, but of a tangle

of by-laws and partial regulations. Unnecessary when
it is not mischievous, mischievous when it is strictly
and logically carried out, the accentual system derives its
only support from the fact above mentioned (the large
number of common syllables to be found in English), from
the actual existence of it in *Old* English before the language
and the poetry had been modified by Romance admixture,
and from an unscientific application of the true proposi-
tion that the classical and the English prosodies are *in
some respects* radically different

It will, however, of course be proper to give examples Examples
of the manner in which accentual (or stress) scansion is $\frac{\text{of its appli}}{\text{cation}}$
worked by its own partisans and exponents   Their common
formula for the English heroic line in its normal aspect is
$5xa$ [1]

> What óft | was thoúght, | but ne'er | so wéll | exprést

If they meet with a trisyllabic foot, as in

> And má|ny an am|orous, má|ny a hu|morous lay,

they either admit *two* unaccented syllables between
the accents, or suggest "slur" or *synalæpha* or "elision"
("man-yan"), this last especially taking place with the defi-
nite article "the" ("th'")   But this last process need not
be insisted on by accentualists, though it must by the next
class we shall come to

It is common, if not universal, for accentual prosodists
to hold that two accents must not come together, so that
they are troubled by that double line of Milton's where the
ending and beginning run—

> Both stood

> Both turned.

---

[1] This formula seems due to Latham, the compiler of a well-known
work on Language   The foot-division mark | has been sometimes adopted
(by Guest) and defended (by Professor Skeat, who, however, does not
personally employ it) as a substitute for the accent mark   For argu-
ments against this which seem to the present writer strong, see *H E P.*
i. 8, and iii 276, 544 545.

They admit occasional "inversion of accent" (trochaic substitution)—especially at the opening of a verse,—as in the line which Milton begins with

Ma̋ker ,

but, when they hold fast to their principles, dislike it much in other cases, as, for instance, in

fa̋lls to | the grőund

And they complain when the accent which they think necessary falls, as they call it, on one of two weak syllab̶l̶e̶s̶ as in

And when |

This older and simpler school, however, represented by Johnson, has been largely supplemented by another, whose members use the term "stress" or *ictus* in preference to "accent," and to a greater or less extent give up the attempt to establish normality of line at all

Its various sects and supporters.   Some of them [1] admit lines of four, three, or even two stresses, as, for instance—

His mĭn|ĭstĕrs of vĕn|gĕance and pŭrsŭit |

Others [2] break it up into "bars" or "sections" which need not contain the same or any fixed number of "beats" or "stresses," while some again [3] seem to regard the stresses of a whole passage as supplying, like those of a prose paragraph, a sufficient rhythmical skeleton the flesh of which —the unaccented or unstressed part—is allowed to huddle itself on and shuffle itself along as it pleases.

This school has received large recent accessions , but even now the greater number of accentualists do little more than eschew the terms of quantity, and substitute for them those of accent, more or less consistently   Many of

[1] Of whom the most important by far is Mr Bridges, though he has never, I think, reduced the number to two, or increased it above five. Others, however, have admitted *eight* !

[2] *E g* Mr Thomson, Sir W M'Cormick, M Verrier

[3] *E g* Mr J A Symonds, Mr Hewlett

them even use the classical names and divisions of feet;
and with these there need not, according to strict necessity,
be any quarrel, since their error, if it be one, only affects
the constitution of prosodic material before it is verse at
all, and not the actual prosodic arrangement of verse as
such

CHAPTER III

SYSTEMS OF ENGLISH PROSODY—THE SYLLABIC

A STRICTLY syllabic system of prosody has hardly at any
time been a sufficient key, even in appearance, to English
verse   But it has preserved a curious insistence of pre-
tension, and the study of it is of great and informing
prosodic interest   It is, of course, French in origin—
French prosody, except in eccentric instances, has been
from the first, and is to the present day, strictly syllabic
It is innocuous in so far as in the words "octosyllable,"
"decasyllable," "fourteener," and the like, the irreducible
syllabic minimum (save by licence of certain metres) is
conveniently indicated   In so early an example as Orm
(*v inf*) we find it carried out exactly and literally   But
the inherited spirit of Old English, surviving and resisting
all changes and reinforcements of vocabulary, accent, and
everything else, will have none of it   In the *fif*teener[1]
itself, in its sequel and preserver, ballad measure, in octo-
syllabic couplet—not merely in the loose form of *Genesis
and Exodus*, but to some extent even in the strict one of
The Owl and the Nightingale, in almost all mixed modes,
when once they have broken free from direct copying of
French or Provençal, it is cast to the winds   It can only
be introduced into Chaucer, as far as his heroic couplet
is concerned, by perpetual violations of probability, docu
ment, and rhythm   Even in Gower, the principal repre-

[1] For the almost necessary precedence, owing to the inflexional *e*, of the
*four*teener by this, and for expansion and explanation of other historic
facts mentioned in this chapter, see Scanned Conspectus and Books
II and III

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sentative of it, and one who probably did aim at it, there are some certain, and many probable, lapses from strict observance. But in the linguistic and phonetic changes of the fifteenth century, with the consequent decadence of original literary poetry, the principle of syllabic liberty degenerates into intolerable licence, and the doggerel which resulted, after triumphing or at least existing for some generations, provoked considerable reaction in practice and a still more considerable mistake in principle

Wyatt, Surrey, and their successors in the middle of the century and the first half of Elizabeth's reign, are pretty strict syllabically; and it was from their practice, doubtless, that Gascoigne—one of the last of the group, but our first English preceptist in prosody—conceived the idea that English has but one foot, of two syllables   Spenser's practice in the *Shepherd's Kalendar* is not wholly in accordance with this, but even he came near to observing it later, and the early blank-verse writers were painfully scrupulous in this respect.

But it was inevitable that blank verse, and especially dramatic blank verse, should break through these restraints, and in the hands of Shakespeare it soon showed that the greatest English verse simply paid no attention at all to syllabic limitations, while lyric, though rather slower, was not so very slow to indulge itself to some extent, as it was tempted by "triple-timed" music   The excesses, however, of the decayed blank verse of the First Caroline period joined with those of the enjambed couplet, though these were not strictly syllabic, to throw liberty into discredit, and the growth and popularity of the strict *closed* couplet encouraged a fresh delusion—that English prosody *ought* to be syllabic   Dryden himself to some extent countenanced this, though he indemnified himself by the free use of the Alexandrine, or even of the fourteener, in decasyllabics   The example of Milton was for some time not imitated, and has even to this day been misunderstood.   About the time of Dryden's own death, in the

temporary decadence of the poetic spirit, syllabic prosody made a bold bid for absolute rule

In the year 1702 Edward Bysshe, publishing[1] the first detailed and positive manual of English prosody, laid it down, without qualification or apology, that "the structure of our verses, whether blank or rhyming, consists in a certain number of syllables , not in feet composed of long or short syllables, as the verses of the Greeks and Romans " And although all Bysshe's details, which, as will be seen below, were rigidly arranged on these principles— so that he made no distinction between verse of triple time (though he grudgingly and almost tacitly admitted it) and verse of double, as such,—were not adopted by others, his doctrine was always (save in a very few instances to be duly noticed later) implicitly, and often explicitly, the doctrine of the eighteenth century Nor has this ever lost a certain measure of support , while it is very curious that the few foreign students of English prosody who have arisen in late years are usually inclined to it

One difficulty in it, however, could never escape its most peremptory devotees , and a shift for meeting it must have been devised at the same time as the doctrine It was all very well to lay down that English verse *must* consist of a certain number of syllables , but it could escape no one who had ever read a volume or even a few pages of English poetry, that it *did* consist of a very uncertain number of them The problem was, therefore, how to get rid of the surplus where it existed It was met by recourse to that very classical prosody which was in other respects being denied, and by the adoption of ruthless "elision " or "crushing out" of the supposed superfluities This involved not merely elision proper—the vanishing or metrical ignoring of a vowel at the end of a word before

a vowel (or an *h*) at the beginning of another, "th(e)

Almighty," "t(o) admire " Application of a similar pro-

[1] See Bibliography and Book III

cess to the interior of words like "vi(o)let," "di(a)mond," was inculcated, and in fact insisted on ; and even where consonants preceded and followed a vowel of the easily slurrable kind, as in "watery," 'the suppression of the *e*

and sometimes even of other vowels—"del(i)cate "—was prescribed

There may possibly be two opinions (though it seems Its results. strange that there should be) on the æsthetic results of this proceeding   To the present writer they seem utterly hideous , while the admission of the full syllables seems melodious and satisfying   It may also be pointed out that there is a very tell-tale character about the fact that not a few prosodists who defend " elision " in principle defend it only as a metrical fiction, and even lay down positively that the elided syllables are *always* to be pronounced [1]   But it is far less matter of opinion—if it is even matter of opinion at all—first, that this process of mangling and monotonising English poetry is unnecessary, and, secondly, that it is inconsistent with the historic development of the language and the literature   That it is unnecessary will, it is hoped, be demonstrated in the next of these Introductory Chapters , and that it is unhis-tofical the whole body of the historical survey to follow will show   And another objection of great importance can be made good at once and here   The rigid observance of the syllabic system produces, and cannot but produce, an intolerable monotony—a monotony which has made the favourite verse of the eighteenth century positively (if perhaps excessively and unreasonably) loathsome to succeeding generations   It would be condemned by this, if it had no other fault ; while it has, as a matter of fact, 'hardly a virtue.   It was tried once for all by Orm, and failed once for all, in the beginning of modern English, and it has never been tried in practice or maintained in theory

[1] This, it may be pointed out, is in flat contradiction to the older doctrine of, for instance, Dryden, that no vowel can be cut out before another in scansion which is not so in pronunciation

since without validating inferior poetry and discouraging good.[1]

[1] Examples here can hardly be needed   At any rate, one (Shenstone's, *v inf* , own) may suffice

The loose wall *tottering* o'er the trembling shade

Cautions. Here syllabic prosody would pronounce, and in strictness spell, " tott'ring ' — This is perhaps as good a place as any to make some remarks on the connection of syllables with English prosody   In that prosody there are no *extrametrical* syllables, except at the end of lines, and (much more doubtfully) at the cæsura, which is a soit of end   Every syllable that occurs elsewhere must be part of, or constitute, a foot , and it is for this reason that the " Rules   following begin with feet, not syllables   It is practically impossible, in many, if not in most cases, to tell the prosodic value of an English syllable, or an English word, till you see it in actual verse —Again, although there are, of course, innumerable instances where a foot coincides with a word, the composition of the foot out of syllables belonging to different words, as in

The thun|*der of* | the trum|*pets of* | the night,

or

To set|*tle the* | success|*ion of* | the state,

is usually more effective —And, lastly, although there have, at different times, been strange prejudices against the use of monosyllables and of polysyllables, these prejudices are, in both cases, wholly unreasonable

CHAPTER IV

SYSTEMS OF ENGLISH PROSODY—THE FOOT

ALTHOUGH the accentual and the syllabic systems—some-
times separate, but oftener combined—have, on the whole,
dominated English preceptist prosody almost from the
time when it first began to be formally studied, there has,
until very recently, been a constant tendency to blend
with these, if not the full acceptance, at any rate a certain
borrowing, of the terminology of a *third* system—the foot-
and-quantity one, so well known in the classical prosodies.
Not before Bysshe (*c* 1700) do you find any positive
denial of "feet" Gascoigne (*c* 1570) talks of them, Milton
speaks of "committing short and long", Dr Johnson,
though using a strict accent-and-syllable scheme, admits
(whether with absolute accuracy or not does not matter)
that "our heroic verse is derived from the iambic" And
in more modern times, from Mitford downwards, arguments
against the applicability of the terms in English have not
unfrequently been found consistent with an occasional, if
not a regular, employment of them

In fact, nothing but a curious suspicion, as of something
cabalistical in them, can prevent their use, or the use of
some much more clumsy and inconvenient equivalents—
bars, beats, sections, what not ,[1] for that use is based on the
most unalterable of all things, except the laws of thought,
the laws of mathematics Everybody, whatsoever his
prosodic sect, admits that verse consists of alternations
of two values—some would say of more than two, but that

[1] The most recent, perhaps, and the most unfortunate competitor is
"stress-unit"—for there are most certainly feet (*i e* constitutive divisions
of lines) which include no stress at all

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only complicates the application of an unchanged argument.
Now the possible combinations of two different things,
in successive numerical units of two, three, four, etc, are
not arbitrary, but naturally fixed; and the names of feet—
iambic, trochaic, dactylic, etc —are merely tickets for these
combinations

The reasons of the objection have been various, and
are perhaps not always fully stated, or even fully appreciated,
by those who advance them   It is most common perhaps
now (though it was not so formerly) to find the objection
itself lodged thus—that the so-called English iambs,
anapæsts, etc, are different things from the feet so called
in Greek or Latin   This is sufficiently met by the reply
that they are naturally so, the languages being different,
and that all that is necessary is that the English foot
should stand to English prosody as the Latin or Greek foot
does to Latin or Greek, that is to say, as the necessary and
constituent middle stage between the syllable and the line
But a less vague and, in appearance at least, more solid
objection is that the Latin and the Greek foot were con-
stituted out of definite "quantities" attaching to definite
syllables, and that there is "no syllabic quantity in English,"
though there may be vowel quantity   And this objection is
generally, if not always, based on or backed by a further
one, that "quantity" depends directly on *time* of pronuncia-
tion, while this again is supported, still further back, by
elaborate discussions of accent and quantity,[1] by denials
that accent can constitute quantity, and by learned
expatiations in quest of proof that Greeks and Romans
scanned their verses as they did *not* pronounce them—
that there was a sort of amicable pitched battle, always
going on, between quantity and accent.

Now it can be easily shown that, even if these con-

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[1] A full account of these would occupy a book bigger than the larger
History   Among the latest and most curious attempts on the subject is
one to mark off certain metrical rhythms as "accentual," certain others as
"quantitative '   This (which partly results from the superfluous anxiety
to discover and isolate the sources of length and shortness) makes some-
thing very like a chimera or a hotch-potch of English verse

tentions as to classical verse be accepted (and some of "Quantity" in English
them are very doubtful), they supply no sort of bar to the
application of the foot system, with such quantity as it
requires, to English It is quite true that the proportion
of syllables of absolutely fixed quantity — that is fixed
capacity of filling up what corresponds to the long or short
places of a classical verse—is, in English, very small There
are some which the ear discovers by the awkwardness of
the sound when they are forced into a "short" place So
also there are some which—by the coincidence of vowel
quality, position, and absence of accent—it is practically
impossible to put into a "long" place, such as the second
syllable of "Deity" Nor are what are called "long vowel
sounds"—the sounds of "rite," "fate," "beat," "Europe,"
"omen," "awkward," etc —always sufficient to make a
syllable inflexibly long , though they may be sometimes
Again, the extremest "shortness" of vowel sound, as in
"and" or "if," will not prevent such syllables from being
indubitably long in certain values and collocations In The "common" syllable
other words, that peculiarity of being "common"—that is
to say, of being capable of holding either position—which
was far from unknown in the classical languages, is very
much more prevalent in English It would be quite false
to say that every syllable in English is common , but it is
scarcely at all false to say that almost every English *mono*-
syllable is, and an extremely large proportion of others

The methods and movements by which this common-
ness is turned into length or shortness for the purposes of
the poet are obvious enough, and in practice undeniable ,
though the processes of professional phonetics sometimes
tend to obscure or even to deny them Every well-educated
and well-bred Englishman, who has been accustomed to
read poetry and utter speech carefully, knows that when he
emphasises a syllable like "and," "if," "the," etc , it
becomes what the Germans would call *versfahig*—capable
of performing its metrical duty—in the long position , that
when he does not, it is not so capable Every one knows
in practice, though it may be denied in theory, that similar

lengthening[1] follows the doubling of a consonant after a short vowel, or the placing of a group of consonants of different kinds after it—the vowel-sound running, as it were, under the penthouse of consonants till it emerges Extreme loudness and sharpness would have the same effect in conversation, but, unless very obviously suggested by sense, would escape notice in silent reading   Not very seldom, the mere art of the poet will get weight enough on a short syllable to fit it for its place as "long," or conjure away from a long one length enough to enable it to act as "short."

At any rate, it is with these two values, and with syllables endowed with them by custom, incidental effect, place, sense, the poet's sleight of hand, or otherwise, that the English poet deals , and has dealt ever since a period impossible to nail down with exactness to year or decade, but beginning, perhaps, early in the twelfth century and perfecting itself in the thirteenth and later   And impartial examination of the whole facts from that period shows that he deals with them on a system, in early times no doubt almost or quite unconsciously adopted, but perfectly recognisable.   In still earlier or "Old" English verse this system is not discernible at all , in the earliest period of "Middle" English it is discernible, struggling to get itself into shape   Later, with advances and relapses, it perfects itself absolutely   Its principles are as follows —

Intermediate rules of arrangement   **Every English verse consists of a certain number of feet, made up of long and short syllables, each of which is of equal consequence in the general composition of the line.**

The correspondence of the foot arrangements between different lines constitutes the link between them, and determines their general character.

Some interim rules of feet (expanded in note).   **But this correspondence need not be limited to repetition of feet composed of a fixed and identical number of syllables in the same order; on the contrary, the best verse admits of large substitution of feet of different syllabic length, provided—(1) that these are equal or nearly equal in prosodic value to those for which they are substituted;**

[1] In metrical quantity, not in vowel sound ·

(2) that the substituted feet go rhythmically well with those next to which they are placed.[1]

[1] A fuller list of observed rules for English verse generally will be found in the next chapter, but between the two a set of remarks, specially on the foot, may be extracted from the larger *History*, vol 1 pp 82-84

Every English verse which has disengaged itself from the versicle[1] is composed, and all verses that are disengaging themselves therefrom show a *nisus* towards being composed, of feet of one, two, or three syllables.

The foot of one syllable is always long, strong, stressed, accented, what-not [2]

The foot of two syllables usually consists of one long and one short syllable, and though it is not essential that either should come first, the short precedes rather more commonly.

The foot of three syllables never has more than one long syllable in it, and that syllable, save in the most exceptional rhythms, is always the first or the third In modern poetry, by no means usually, but not seldom, it has no long syllable at all.

The foot of one syllable is practically not found except

a, In the first place of a line.

b, In the last place of it

c, At a strong cæsura or break, it being almost invariably necessary that the voice should rest on it long enough to supply the missing companion to make up the equivalent of a "time and a half" at least

d, In very exceptional cases where the same trick of the voice is used apart from strict cæsura

The foot of two syllables and that of three may, subject to the rules below, be found anywhere.

But

These feet of two and three syllables may be very freely substituted for each other

There is a certain metrical and rhythmical norm of the line which must not be confused by too frequent substitutions.

In no case, or in hardly any case,[3] must such combinations be put together so that a juxtaposition of more than three short syllables results.

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[1] Of Anglo-Saxon and very early Middle English poetry   See Scanned Conspectus and Book II

[2] Except, to speak paradoxically, when it is nothing at all   The pause-foot or half-foot, the "equivalent of silence," is by no means an impossible or unknown thing in English poetry, as, for instance, in Lady Macbeth's line, 1 v 41—

Under | my bat|tlements | ∧ Come, | you spirits,

where | spirits, | though not actually impossible, would spoil the line in one way, and "come," as a monosyllabic foot, in another

[3] The exceptions, and probably the only ones, are to be found, if any-

But, for the purpose of this present book, illustration and example are of much more value than abstract exposition, and to them we shall now turn ↳

Here, for instance, is a line from Tennyson's " Brook "

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail

Now the system which regards syllabic precision first of all, with a minor glance at accent, but rejects "feet," surveys this line and pronounces it passable with the elision

Twinkled *th'* innumerable ear and tail,

but rather shakes its head at the absence of accent, or the slight and weak accent, in "innumerₐble," and the "inver-

sion " of accent in "twinkled "

The system which looks at accent first of all pronounces that there are only *four* proper accents [stresses] here

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail

Both these systems, moreover—the syllabic, as far as it recognises accent, the accentual, of necessity,—regard "twinkled " as the admittance (pardonable, censurable, or quite condemnable, according to individual theory) of "wrenched accent," "inverted stress," or something of the kind—as a thing abnormal and licentious

The foot system simply scans it—

$-$ ◡   ◡ ◡$-$ ◡$-$ ◡ $-$ ◡ $-$
Twinkled | the innu |mera|ble ear | and tail ,

regarding "twinkled " as a trochee substituted in full right for an iamb, and "the innu-" as an anapæst in like case , " merā " as raised, by a liberty not out of accordance with the actual derivation, to a sufficiently long quantity for its position, and the other two feet as pure iambs

Now let us examine these three views

In the first place, the bare syllabic view (which, it is fair

where, in some modern blank verse, where two tribrachs, or a tribrach and an iamb or anapæst, succeed each other.

to say, is almost obsolete, save among foreigners, though in consistency it ought to find defenders at home) takes no account of any special quality in the line at all   It is turned out to sample , the knife is applied at " th' " to fit specification , and there you are   It differs only from Southey's favourite heroic ejaculation

<div align="center">Aballiboozabanganornbo '</div>

in being less " pure "

The syllabic-*plus*-accentual view passes it , but with certain reservations   " Twinkled " is an " aberration," a " licence " perhaps (in some views certainly), a more or even less venial sin, while " -āble " with *a* in a stressed or accented place is a case for more head-shaking still   The line is saved , yet so as by fire

So is it under the looser stress-accentual system, but by a fire more devouring still   According to this latter, all rhythmical similarity with its companion five-stress lines is lost on the one hand, and on the other a jumble, with difficulty readable and absolutely heterogeneous, is created in the line itself   Your first rhythmical mouthful is " twink-," then you gabble over " led the innū- " till you rest on this last , then you repeat the process (as soon as you have breath enough) with " -merable ear," and finally you reach " and tail "   But you never find your fifth stress, and instead of continuous blank verse you make the context a sort of clumsy Pindaric [1]

Even if this last description be regarded as exaggerated, it will remain a sober fact that, in all these handlings, either the beauty of the line is obscured altogether, or it is smuggled off as a " licence," or it is converted into something individual, separated from its neighbours, and possessing no kinship to them

Yet the line, though not " a wonder and a wild desire," is a good one , and (therein differing from their eighteenth-century ancestors) the syllabists and accentualists would

[1] It is difficult to see how this effect can be avoided by those who think that accents or stresses, governing prosody, vary in Milton from *eight* to *three*

mostly nowadays allow this, though their principles have to submit it to *privilegia* and allowances to make it out

The foot arrangement makes no difficu'ty, needs no *privilegium*, and necessarily applies none   The line is at once recognised by the ear as a good line and correspondent to its neighbours, which, as a body, and also at once when a few have been read, informed that ear that they were five-foot lines of iambic basis   Therefore it will lend itself to foot-arrangement on that norm   The five feet may be iambs, trochees, anapæsts, spondees, tribrachs, and *perhaps* (this is a question of ear) dactyls and pyrrhics   These may be substituted for each other as the ear shall dictate, provided that the general iambic base is not overthrown or unduly obscured

Further, these feet are composed of long and short syllables, the length and shortness of which is determined to some extent by ordinary pronunciation, but subject to various modifying influences of position and juxtaposition Under those laws to which all its companions are equally and inevitably subject, *mutatis mutandis*, it makes itself out as above

$$- \;\; \smile \;\; \smile \; \smile - \;\; \smile - \smile - \;\; \smile -$$
Twinkled | the innu|mera |ble ear | and tail—

trochee, anapæst, iamb, iamb, iamb   The justification of *ā* in " āble " has already been partly given , it may be added that in the actual pronunciation of the word by good speakers there is a " secondary accent " (as they call it) on the syllable

Here there is no straining, no " private bill " legislation, no separating of the line from its fellows, only a reasonable Reign of Law with reasonable easements

Application further to his " Hollyhock ' song   Let us now take a more complicated instance, also from Tennyson. In that poet's first volume there was a " Song " which, unlike most of its fellows, remained practically unaltered amid the great changes which he introduced later   It has, I believe, always been a special favourite with those who have been most in sympathy with his poetry   But, nearly twenty years after its first appear-

ance, it was described by no ill-qualified judge (an admirer
of Tennyson on the whole) in the words given in the note [1]
and I believe[?] it had been similarly objected to earlier
Now what were the lines that excited this cry of agonised
indignation ?   They are as follows —

> A spirit haunts the year's last hours
> Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers
> > To himself he talks ;
> For at eventide, listening earnestly,
> At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
> > In the walks ,
> > Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
> Of the mouldering flowers
> > Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
> > > Over its grave in the earth so chilly ,
> > Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
> > Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

Now it is not very difficult to perceive the defects of
this extremely beautiful thing in the eyes of a syllabic-
accentualist, as this critic (whether knowing it or not)
probably was

The syllabists have always, by a perhaps natural though
perhaps also irrational extension of their arithmetical pre-
possession, disliked lines of irregular length on the page.
Bysshe would have barred stanzas , a very few years before
Tennyson's book, Crowe, then Public Orator at Oxford,
had protested against the exquisite line-adjustments of the
seventeenth century   To the pure accentualists the thing
might seem an unholy jumble, accented irregularly,
irregularly arranged in number, seemingly observing differ-
ent rhythms in different parts

Now see how it looks under the foot system .

> A spi|rit haunts | the year's | last hours
> Dwelling | amid | these yel|lowing bowers .
> > To himself | he talks ,

---

[1] Having already called it "an odious piece of pedantry," the critic
(*Blackwood's Magazine*, April 1849) adds "What metre, Greek or Roman,
Russian or Chinese, it was intended to imitate we have no care to in-
quire the man was writing English and had no justifiable pretence for
torturing our ears with verse like this "

For at e|ventide, lis|tening ear|nestly,
At his work | you may hear | him sob | and sigh
   In the walks ,
   Earth|ward he bow|eth the hea|vy̆ stalks
Of the moul|dering flowers
   Hea|vily hangs | the broad | sunflower
    O|ver its grave | in the earth | so chilly ,
   Hea|vily hangs | the hol|lyhock,
    Hea|vily hangs | the ti|ger lily—

the feet being sometimes, at the beginning of the lines,
monosyllabic, and of course of one long syllable only

(Earth-|, Hea-|, O-|) , sometimes dissyllabic, iambic mainly,
but occasionally at least *semi*-spondaic—

    A spir|it haunts | the year's | last hours ,

often trisyllabic, and then always anapæstic—

    For at e|ventide list|ening earn|estly

Even so early in the present book this should need
little comment , but it may be the better for some   It
is an instance of substitution carried out boldly, but
unerringly , so that, iamb and anapæst being the coin of
interchange and equivalence, the rhythm is now iambic,
now anapæstic chiefly, the two being not muddled, but
fluctuant—a prosodic part-song   And the foot system
brings this out straightforwardly and on its general prin-
ciples, with no beggings or assumptions whatever for the
particular instance   Moreover, the structure of the piece
may be paralleled freely from the songs in Shakespeare's
plays [1]

Such appli
cation pos
sible always
and every-
where

It is indeed sometimes said that such methods of
scansion as these may apply very well to nineteenth-century
poets, but that they are out of place in regard to older
ones   This is demonstrably false   The method applies
alike, and in like measure obviates all difficulties, in
examples of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth,
seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries   It is as applicable

[1] Such as " Under the Greenwood Tree "

to the early and mostly anonymous romancers and song-writers as to Tennyson, it accommodates Shakespeare as well as Browning   To Milton as to Shelley, to Dryden and Pope as to the most celebrated of our modern experimenters, say to Miss Christina Rossetti or Mr Swinburne, it " fits like a glove."   The rules in the next chapter, and the subjoined examples fully scanned in Chapter VI , will show its application as a beginning , the whole contents of this volume must give the fuller illustration and confirmation [1]

[1] For cautions and additions, as well as explanations, see Glossary, especially under '' Foot,' ''Stress-unit,'' Quantity," etc

CHAPTER V

RULES OF THE FOOT SYSTEM

§ A FEET

(These Rules *are not imperative or compulsory precepts, but observed inductions from the practice of English poets He that can break them with success, let him)*

Feet composed of long and short syllables **1.** English poetry, from the first constitution of literary Middle English to the present day, can best be scanned by a system of *feet*, or groups of syllables in two different values, which may be called for convenience *long* ($-$) and *short* ($\cup$).

Not all combinations actual **2.** The nature of these groups of syllables is determined by the usual mathematical laws of permutation; but some of them appear more frequently than others in English poetry, and some hardly occur at all.

Differences from "classical' feet **3.** Although, in the symbols of their constitution, these feet resemble those of the classical prosodies, it does not follow that they are identical with them, except mathematically,[1] the nature of the languages being different; and, in particular, their powers of combining in metre are far from being identical, so that combinations of feet which are successful in Greek and Latin need by no means be successful in English. Success is indeed almost limited to instances where the metrical constituents are restricted to iambs ($\cup-$), anapæsts ($\cup\cup-$), and trochees ($-\cup$), with the spondee ($--$) as an occasional ingredient.

[1] See above, Rule 2 It should be hardly necessary to remark that the explanations and exemplifications of these rules are to be furnished by the whole book, and that the Glossary in particular should be in constant use.

4. The iamb ($\smile$ –), the trochee (– $\smile$), and the anapæst ($\smile\smile$ –) are by far the commonest English feet; in fact, the great bulk of English poetry is composed of them. *The three usual kinds —iamb, trochee, anapæst*

5. The spondee (– –) is not so unusual as has sometimes been thought; but owing to the commonness of most syllables, especially in *thesis*, it may often be passed as an iamb, and sometimes as a trochee. *The spondee.*

6. The dactyl (– $\smile\smile$), on the other hand, though observable enough in separate English words, does not seem to compound happily in English, its use being almost limited to that of a substitute for the trochee. Used in continuity, either singly or with other feet, it has a tendency, especially in lines of some length, to rearrange itself into anapæsts with anacrusis. In very short lines, however, this "tilt" has not always time to develop itself. *The dactyl.*

7. The pyrrhic ($\smile\smile$) may occur in English, but is rarely wanted (see note above on spondee). *The pyrrhic.*

8. The tribrach ($\smile\smile\smile$), however, has become not unusual. *The tribrach*

9. Other combinations (for names see Glossary) than these are certainly rare, and are perhaps never wanted in English verse, though they are plentiful in prose. (See Rule 41 and Glossary.) *Others.*

§ B CONSTITUTION OF FEET

10. The quality, or contrast of quality, called "quantity," which fits English syllables for their places as long or short in a foot, is not uniform or constant. *Quality or "quantity" in feet.*

11. It does not necessarily depend on the amount of time taken to pronounce the syllable; though there is probably a tendency to lengthen or shorten this time according to the prosodic length or shortness required. *Not necessarily "time,"*

12. It does not wholly depend on the usual quantity [1] of *nor vowel "quantity"*

[1] *E g* "fāte" or "fāst" as opposed to "făt", "mēet" to "dĕter", "rīte" to "fĭt", "ōmen" to "ŏtter", "dūpe" to "bŭt"

the vowel sound in the syllable; for long-sounding
vowels are not very seldom shortened, and short-sound-
ing ones are constantly made long.

Accumulated
consonants,
 13. An accumulation of consonants after the vowel
will lengthen it prosodically, but need not necessarily
do so.

or rhetorical
stress,
 14. Strong rhetorical stress will almost always lengthen
if required.

or place in
verse will
quantify
 15. The place in verse, if cunningly managed by the
poet, will lengthen or shorten.

Commonness
of mono
syllables
 16. All monosyllables are common, the articles being,
however, least susceptible of lengthening, and the in-
definite perhaps hardly at all.

§ C Equivalence and Substitution

Substitution
of equivalent
feet
 17. The most important law of English prosody is that
which permits and directs the interchange of certain of
these feet with others, or, in technical language, the
substitution of equivalent feet.

Its two laws
 18. This process of substitution is governed by two
laws: one in a manner *a priori*, the other the result of
experience only.

Confusion of
base must be
avoided
 19. Substitution must not take place in a batch of lines,
or even (with rare exceptions) in a single line, to such an
extent that the base of the metre can be mistaken.

(Of which
the ear must
judge)
 20. Even short of this result of confusion the ear must
decide whether the substitution is allowable.

Certain sub-
stitutions are
not eligible
 21. As a result of experience we find that the feet most
suitable — if not alone suitable — as substitutes for the
iamb—the commonest foot-staple—are the trochee, the
anapæst, and the tribrach; that the dactyl substitutes
well, if not too freely used, for the trochee.[1] These
equivalences are reciprocal.

[1] The combination of dactyl and trochee in English, however, will not
produce the same effect as the combination of dactyl and spondee in Latin
or Greek

§ D Pause

22. Next to *equivalence, the most important and valuable Variation of pause
engine in the constitution of English verses is the varia-
tion of the middle or internal pause.**

23. Except in very long lines — which always tend to Practically at discretion
pause themselves either at the middle or at *two* places
more or less equidistant—there is no reason why the
pause of an English line should not be at any syllable from
the first to the penultimate, and none why it should or
should not occur at the end of a line, couplet, or even
stanza — though in the last-named case rather special
reasons are required for its omission.   Not every line
need necessarily have any pause at all.**

24. The effect of blank verse depends more upon pause- Blank verse specially de-pendent on pause
variation than upon anything else; and by this variation,
accompanied by stop or overrun ("enjambment") at
the end of the line, *verse-paragraphs* are constituted,
which can contain verse-*clauses* or *sentences*, in like
manner brought into existence by pauses.**

§ E Line Combination

25. Lines, composed as above of feet, can be used in Simple or complex
English either continuously on the same or equivalent
*patterns, or in batches of two or more.***

26. The batches of two almost necessarily require Rhymes necessary to couplet
rhyme to indicate and isolate them, especially if the indi-
vidual lines are of the same length.   Other batches
[stanzas] might, as far as any *a priori* objection goes,
consist of unrhymed lines, symmetrically correspondent,
or irregular [Pindaric].**

27. It is, however, found in practice, despite the Few in stances of successful unrhymed stanza
examples of Campion, Collins, and one or two others,
that rhymeless batching or stanza-making is very seldom
successful.[1]**

[1] Rules 26 and 27 do not apply to *un*metrical verse, such as the old
alliterative couplet-line, or the rhythmed prose-verse of *Ossian*, Blake,
and Whitman

Unevenness of line in length

28. There is neither *a priori* objection nor *a posteriori* inconvenience to be urged against the construction of stanzas or batches in lines of very uneven length.

Stanzas to be judged by the ear

29. Every stanza-scheme must undergo, and is finally to be judged by, the test of the ear, and that only.

Origin of commonest line com binations

30. The commonest and oldest line-combinations—octosyllabic couplet, "common" or "ballad" measure, "long" and "short" measure, etc.—in some cases demonstrably, in all probably, result from the breaking up of the old long line ("fifteener" or "fourteener"), which itself came from the metricalising of the O.E. double stave.

§ F Rhyme

Rhyme natural in English

31. It is natural to English poetry—*i.e.* Middle and Modern English, or English poetry proper—to rhyme; and, except in the case of blank verse, no unrhymed measure for the last seven centuries has ever produced large quantities of uniformly satisfactory quality.

It must be "full,"

32. Rhyme in English must be "full," *i.e.* consonantal (on the vowel *and* following consonant or consonants), not merely assonantal (on the vowel only).   Assonance by itself is insufficient.

and not identical

33. It should not, according to modern usage, be *identical*—that is to say, the rhyming syllables should not consist of exactly the same vowels and consonants. But exceptions to this may be found in good poets, especially when the *words* are not the same.

General rule as to it

34. Good rhyme has necessarily varied, at different times, with pronunciation; but a certain rough rule may be seen prevailing not uncommonly, that vowels in rhyme may take the value which they have in words other than those actually employed.[1]

Alliteration

35. What is sometimes called "*head*-rhyme" (*i.e.* "alliteration") has now no place in English as rhyme at all, nor does it constitute either metre or stanza; but it

---

[1] Thus Dryden rhymes "travell*er*" to "st*ar*," giving the *er* the value it has in "cl*er*k"

is a permissible, and often a very considerable, ornament
to verse.

36. Rhyme is either single (on the last syllable only), Single, etc.,
double (on the two last), or triple (on the three last). rhyme
Beyond three the effect would be burlesque, and this is
hard to keep out of triple rhyme, and even sometimes
seems to menace the double.

37. In serious poetry the fuller in sound the single Fullness of
rhyme is the better. sound

38. Rhyme is usually at the end of the line ; but it may Internal
be "internal"; that is to say, syllables at one or even rhyme per
missible,
more than one place within the line may rhyme to the
syllable at the end or to each other, and syllables within
one line may rhyme to those at corresponding places
within another.

39. But this has a dangerous tendency to break the but
lines up. sometimes
dangerous

§ G. MISCELLANEOUS

40. The effect of English poetry at all times, but es- Vowel-
pecially for the last hundred years, has been largely music
dependent on *Vowel-music.* This is by no means limited
to the practice of what used to be called "making the
sound suit the sense," though the two sometimes coin-
cide.   Vowel-music, not without occasional assistance
from consonants, establishes a sort of *accompaniment*
to the intelligible poetry—a prosodic *setting.*

41. In the management of this, as of rhyme, pause, "Finger-
enjambment, and even the selection and juxtaposition of ing"
feet themselves, the poet often, if not as a rule in the
best examples, uses particular sleights of fingering and
execution parallel to those of the musical composer and
performer.   The results of this may appear to constitute
verse-sections different from the feet.   But these, how-
ever, never supersede feet, and are always resolvable
into them ; nor do they ever supply criteria for anything
except the individual line or passage.   They stand to
prosody proper very much as delivery or elocution does
to rhetoric.   The conveniences of this "fingering," or

poetic elocution, as well as sense and other things, may sometimes bring about *alternative* scansions, but all these connect themselves with and are obedient to the general foot system.[1]

Confusion
of rhythms
intolerable.

42. Despite this possibility of alternative scansion, and the other and commoner possibility of substitution of individual feet, iambic and trochaic, dactylic and anapæstic, metre or rhythm remain entirely distinct. Any system which regards these as merely different names for the same thing is self-condemned as disregarding the evidence, or rather verdict, of the ear.

[1] For elucidation and example see below, in Glossary, as above noted p 8   The " sections ' referred to are not those of Guest.

CHAPTER VI

I OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

Scansion only dimly visible

No better examples can be taken for this than two already used by Dr Sievers—the close of the *Phœnix* with its illuminative Latin admixture, and a bit of *Beowulf* (205 *ff*) (dotted foot division added in first case):

Háfaठ us alýfed *lucis* | *auctor*
Þœt we mo tun hér *meru|eri*
ʒóddædum be ʒiétan *gaudia in* | *coelo*
Pǽr we motun *maxima* | *regna*

Hǽfde se ʒoda]| Géata téoda
cémpan ʒecórene || þara þe ne cénóste
findan míhte || fíftener súm
súndwudu sohte || sécʒ wísade
láʒucræftig món || lándʒemýrcu

In these the general trochaic run and the corresponding tendency to dactylic substitution, which are so evident in the Latin, as it were *muffle* themselves in the English, and the contrast, so strikingly brought out in the mixed passage, is not really less evident in the pure Anglo-Saxon one The muffling is the result, partly of the imperfect substitution, or rather the actual presence of syllables not digested into the metre , partly of the overbearing middle pause, which, suggesting another in each section, chops the whole up into disconnected grunts 'or spasmodic phrases.

II Late Old English with *Nisus* towards Metre

("Grave" Poem   Guest's text, spelling, and accentuation, the usual marks for the latter being substituted for his dividing bars, and foot division added in dots

> Thé wes bóld ge býld || er thú 1 bóren wére,
> Thé wes mólde 1 mynt || er thú of móder cóme,
> Ac hit nés no 1 díht || né theo deópnes 1 méten,
> Nés gyt 1 lóced || hu long hit the wére

Here an immense advance is made   The rhythm is still trochaic, though it is by no means certain that it does not show symptoms of *iambicisation*   It is far more well marked , and one of the means of the marking is that the "ditch in the middle"—the formal pause,—though no doubt technically and even rhetorically existing, is overrun by the suggested feet as long as the trochee is kept   But if this pause holds its place it suggests *iambic* scansion—

> The | wes bold | gebyld ;

and something like the whole future of English poetry lies in the suggestion   Do not omit to notice the metrical assistance given by the epanaphora, or repetition of the same word and phrases in the same place, and by the imperfect and irregular assonances emphasising the divisions

III Transition Period

Metre struggling to assert itself in a New Way

Part of the verses of St Godric

> Sainte Mari e Vir gine
> Moder Je su Cris tes Na zarene
> Onfang schild help thin Godric,
> Onfang bring he gelich mit the in God es ric

A distinct effort at iambic stanza, such as that of the great Ambrosian hymn, *Veni Redemptor gentium*
It is not surprising if the experimenter stumbles, if the old trochaic rhythm is 'sometimes in his head, and if, in

the last verse, he either overruns or divides and makes a
quintet   The struggle towards feet—and new feet—is
there, and rhyme, if imperfect, is there also.

IV   EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

*Attempt at merely Syllabic Uniformity with Unbroken
Iambic Run and no Rhyme*

Orm.

And nu | icc wi|le shæ|wenn ȝuw
summ-del | withth God|ess hellp|e
Off thatt | Judiss|kenn follk|ess lac
thatt Drih|htin wass | full cwem|e

The moral of this (whether it be written as above in
eights and sevens or continuously as " fifteeners ") is un-
mistakable, as stated before the writer, for all his scrupulous
indication of short *vowels*, seems to care no more than if
he were a modern Frenchman for *syllabic* quantity, or even
for accent   He will have his fifteen syllables, his pause
at the eighth, and his sing-song run of seven dissyllabic
batches and a feminine ending   But, will he nill he, he
impresses—with whatever sing-song effect and whatever
merciless iteration—the iambic beat throughout his whole
enormous work

V   EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

*Conflict or Indecision between Accentual Rhythm
and Metrical Scheme*

Layamon

1 ⎰Þa an|swære|de Vor|tiger—
  ⎱of ælc | an vu|ele he | wes wær

2 ⎰Nulle ich heom   belauen‖
  ⎱bi mine quike live

3 ⎰For Hen|gest is | hider | icumen,
  ⎱He is | mi fa|der and ich | his sune

4 ⎰And ich habbe to leof-monne‖
  ⎱his dohter Rowenne

These four couplets (continuous in the original) exhibit perfectly the process which was going on   (2) is a rather shapeless example of the old scarcely metrical Anglo-Saxon line with a roughly trochaic rhythm , and (4) is not very different   But (3) is a not quite successful, though recognisable, attempt at a rhymed (it is actually assonanced) iambic dimeter or octosyllabic couplet   And (1) is this couplet complete at all points in rhythm, metre, and rhyme —capable, in fact, of being exactly quantified and rendered exactly into modern English, all but the dropped final *e* .

$$\smile \ - \ \smile \ - \ \ \smile \ - \ \smile$$
Then an|swered|[e] Vor|tiger
$$\smile \ - \ \smile \ - \ \smile \ - \ \ \smile \ -$$
of ilk |an e|vil he | was ware

VI   EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

The Appearance and Development of the " Fourteener "

The exact origin [1] of the "fourteener," "septenar " (as the Germans call it), "long Alexandrine " (as it was very improperly termed in England for a time), "seven-foot " or "seven-accent " line—to give its various designations— is a matter of conjecture   The "fifteener " of Orm with the redundant syllable lopped off , a variation with iambic or "rising stress " rhythm substituted for trochaic or falling, and a syllable added in the popular Latin metre of

Meum est propositum in taberna mori ,

with other things , most probably of all, a shortened metrification of the old long line, to represent the frequent inequality of its halves better than the octosyllabic couplet —have been suggested   It holds, however, such an important place in English prosody from the early thirteenth to the late sixteenth century, and its resolution into the ballad couplet or "common measure " is of so much greater importance still, that it can hardly have too much attention

[1] More will be found on this and the origin of other metres in Bk   IV

The extraordinarily prosaic and "stumping" cadence of the *Ormulum* perhaps obscures the connection, especially as this rigid syllabisation makes trisyllabic feet impossible But the true rhythm appears, though still with a redundant syllable, in the famous *Moral Ode,* the older versions of which are dated before Orm   The oldest, as it is supposed to be, of these shows the form in full existence—

> Ich em | nu al|der thene | ich wes | a win|tre and | a la|re

But the youngest—

> Ich | am el|der than | ich wes | a win|ter and eke | on lo|re—

gives a priceless improvement, for even if "nu" has dropped out, the resulting monosyllabic foot is quite rhythmical, the trisyllabic "-ter and eke" is unmistakable, and the life and spirit that it gives to the verse equally so

In the course of the thirteenth century the form develops immensely   As a continuous one, it furnishes the staple of the *Chronicle* and *Saints' Lives,* attributed—the former certainly and the latter probably in at least some cases— to Robert of Gloucester   As thus in Lear's complaint

> Mid yox|ing and | mid gret | wop || þas | began | ys mone
> Alas ' | alas ' | þe luþ | or wate | that fyl|est me | þos one
> Þat | þus | clene | me bryngst | adoun || wyder | schal I | be broȝht ?
> For more | sorwe | yt doþ | me when || it co|meth in | my thoȝht
>
> .   .   .
>
> Le|ve doȝ|ter Cor|deille, || to sþo|e þou seid|est me
> Þat as muche | as ych | hadde y | was worþ | per y | ne lev|ed the

But before long it shows, though it may be still written on, an evident tendency to break up into ballad measure, as in the (also thirteenth-century) *Judas* poem

> Hit wes upon a scere-Thursday
>   That ure Laverd aros,
> Ful milde were the wordes
>   He spec to Judas
> "Judas, thou most to Jursalem
>   Oure mete for to bugge,
> Thritti platen of selver
>   Thou bere upo thi rugge

VII EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

The Plain and Equivalenced Octosyllable.

We have seen how, in Layamon, the regular rhymed octosyllabic couplet or iambic dimeter ("four-stress line," etc) shows itself, either as a deliberate alternative to the old long line, or as a half-unconscious result of the endeavour to adjust it to the new metrical tendencies of the language   And we saw, also, that its examples in Layamon himself vary from absolute normality to different stages of licence or incompleteness   Before long, however, we find *two* varieties establishing themselves, with more or less distinct and definite contrast   The first, which seems to keep French or Latin examples more or less strictly before it, is exemplified in *The Owl and the Nightingale,* and scans as follows

> Wi nul|tu singe | an oth|er theode,
> War hit | is much|ele mo|re neode ?
> Thu nea|ver ne | singst in | Irlonde,
> Ne thu | ne cumest | nogt in | Scotlonde
> Hwi nul|tu fa|re to Nor|eweie ?[1]
> And sing|en men | of Gal|ewe·e ?
> Thar | beoth men | that lut|el kunne
> Of songe | that is | bineothe | the sunne

Here, it will be observed, there is practically no licence except a few doubtful *e*'s, and that of omitting one syllable and making the line "acephalous" iambic or catalectic trochaic   This form was followed largely, and, from Chaucer and Gower onwards, by most poets, except Spenser, till the time of Chatterton, Blake, and Coleridge in *Christabel*

Side by side with it, however, a form embodying the special characteristic of the new English prosody—

[1] Or possibly

> Hwi nul|tu fa|re to | Nor[e]weie,

which is more likely as to " farè " (" fare[n] '), and looks forward to the fashion in which we now say ‹' Norway,' but " Galloway "   The remark will extend to not a few other scansions

equivalent substitution—exhibits itself in full force in the mid-thirteenth-century *Genesis and Exodus,* as well as in other miscellaneous poems and in the romances   Here are specimens from *Genesis and Exodus,* 2367-2376

> Josep | gaf ilc | here twin|ne srud,
> Benia|min most | he ma|de prud ,
> Fif we|den best | bar Ben|iamin
> Thre hun|dred plates | of sil|ver fin,
> Al|so fele | o|there | thor til,
> He bad | ben in | is fa|deres wil,
> And x | asses | with se|mes fest ,
> Of all | Egyp|tes welth|e best
> Gaf he | is brethe|re, with her|te blithe,
> And bad | hem ra | pen hem hom | ward swithe

And from *Richard Cœur de Lion,* 3261-3268

> Nay quod | Kyng Rich|ard, be God | my lord,
> Ne schal | I ne|vyr with him | acord '
> Ne hadde ne|vyr ben | lost A|cres toun
> Ne had|de ben | through hys | tresoun
> Yift he yil|de again | my fad|erys tresour
> And Jeru|salem | with gret | honour,
> Thenne | my wrath|e I hym | forgive
> And ne|vyr ellys | whyl that | I live

Here, it will be observed, the foot of *three* syllables— generally, if not always, an anapæst—and even, it would seem, that of *one* sometimes, are freely substituted for that of *two,* adding immensely to the variety, spirit, and freedom of the line.   The first "ne hadde" is perhaps run together

VIII   EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

The Romance-Six or " Rime Couée "

At an uncertain period in the thirteenth century this makes its appearance—no doubt directly imitated from the French, but probably also in part a derivative of the application of metrical tendency to the aboriginal line-couplet   Its French name [1] is not, to our eyes, appropriate

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[1] For origin and explanation see Glossary

—one would rather call it " waisted " or " waisted-and-tailed rhyme ", and as it is very largely (in fact, with the plain couplet predominantly) used in the English romances, " romance-six " as opposed to " ballad-four" seems a good name for it It sometimes, however, extends to three, four, or even six sets of two eights and a six, and is found both plain and equivalenced, as thus

> The brid|des sing|e, it is | no nay,
> The spar|hauk and | the pap|ejay,
>   that joy|e it was | to here
> The thrus|telcok | made eek | his lay,
> The wo|de dowv|e upon | the spray
>   She sang | ful loud|e and clere
>   (Chaucer, *Sir Thopas*)

> As soon |e as the em|peroure yil|dyd the gast,
> A prowd|e gar|son came | in haste,
>   Sir Syn|agote | hight he—
> And broght | an hun|dred hel|mes bright
> Of har|dy men | that cowd|e wel fight
>   Of felde | wolde ne|ver oon flee
>   (*Le Bone Florence of Rome* 778-783.)

The plain form, as Chaucer, of malice prepense, showed in the above, is particularly liable to sing-song effect

IX Early Middle English Period

Miscellaneous Stanzas

(*a*) A very considerable number of these were introduced, sometimes no doubt by direct imitation of French or (as in the case of the "Burns-metre," [1]) Provençal originals, sometimes by the ingenuity of the individual poet, working on the plastic material of the blended language, according to the new metrical foot-system They all scan easily by this, as may be seen in a stanza of *Tristrem*, one of the Harleian Lyrics, and a "Burns stanza " from the York Plays , while anapæstic substitution, amounting to something like "triple time " as a whole, appears in the Hampolian extract.

[1] See again Bk IV for fuller information on this.

The king | had a douh|ter deie,
That mai|den Y|sonde hight,
That gle | was lef | to here
And romaun|ce to rede | aright
Sir Tram|tris hir | gan lere,
Tho, | with al | his might,
What al|le poin|tès were
To se | the sothe | in sight,
    To say,
In Yr|lond nas | no knight,
With Y|sonde | durst play
            (*Sir Tristrem*, 1255-63)

(*Three*-foot iambic with single-foot "bob" All final *e*'s
sounded or elided One monosyllabic, and two or three
trisyllabic, substitutions)

Bytuen|e Mershe | ant A|veril
  when spray | bigin|neth to springe,
The lut|el foul | hath hi|re wyl
  on hy|re lud | to synge ,
Ich lib|be in ∧|∧ love |longinge
For sem | lokest | of al|le thynge,
He may | me ∧|∧ blis|se bringe,
  icham | in hire | baundoun
An hen|dy hap | ichab|be y-hent,
Ichot | from hevene | it is | me sent,
From alle | wymmen | mi love | is lent
  ant lyht | on A|lysoun
       (*Alison*, Harleian MS p 27, ed Wright)

(From the other stanzas it appears that the middle
quatrain should consist of three eights and a six, and that
something has dropped—supplied now by carets Other-
wise the scheme is clear)

Fro thaym | is lost[e] | both[e] game | and glee
He bad|de that they | schuld mais|ters be
Over all[e] kenn[e] thing, | outy-taen | a tree
      He taught | them to be
And ther-|to went[e] | both she | and he
      Agagne | his wille
         ("York" Plays, vi § 2)

(The *final* *e*'s are beginning to be neglected, and the
whole is probably in strict iambics *here*, though vacillation

between four- and five-foot lines is not absolutely impossible
But there is trisyllabic substitution elsewhere, though not
very much   It may be remembered that there is little of
it in Burns's own examples of this metre   Closer still to
his is the following).

> *Eve* Sethyn[1] it | was so | me knyth | it sore,
>   Bot syth|en that wo|man witte|lles ware,
>   Mans mais|t[i]rie | should have | been more
>   Agayns | the gilte
> *Adam* Nay at | my speech|e would thou ne|ver spare
>   That has | us spilte
>
> (*Ibid* § 24)

> (*b*)   My tru|est trea|sure so trai|torly ta|ken,
>   So bit|terly bound|en with by|tand band|es,
>   How soon | of thy ser|vants wast thou | forsa|ken
>   And loathe|ly for my | life hurled | with hand|es
>   (Horstmann's *Hampole*, 1   72)

(Probably, when first written, the ultimate *e*'s of the
even lines were sounded, but even this is not certain,
and the superiority of the shortening would soon have
struck the ear)

(*c*) More elaborate stanza from the Drama

> Myght|ful God | veray, ‖ Ma|ker of all | that is
> Thre per|sons without|en nay, ‖ oone God | in end|les blis,
> Thou maid|è both night | and day, ‖ beest, | fowle | and fish,
> All crea|tures that | lif may ‖ wrought | thou at | thy wish,
>   As thou | wel myght
>   The sun, | the moyn|è, ve|rament
>   Thou maid|è   [and] | the fir|mament,
>   The star|rès al|so full | fervent
>   To shyn|e thou maid|e ful bright
>   ("Townley" Plays, III   p   23, E E T S)

X. EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

Appearance of the Decasyllable

The idea that the new metres in English were in-
variably direct copies of those already existing in French

[1] The MS. has the contraction "Sēn."

(or Latin) seems to be decisively negatived by the fact that the decasyllabic line—the staple, not indeed in couplet but in long batches or *tirades*, of the earlier French *chansons de geste*—makes a rare appearance in English verse before the late fourteenth century But it does appear, thereby, on the other hand, negativing the notion that Chaucer "introduced" it, and suggesting that it was, in part at least, a genuine *experiment*—not in imitation, but in really independent development, of the possibilities of English metre   Here are scanned examples of different periods

(*a*) Uncertain in *intention*, but assuming distinct couplet *cadence*

> Cristes | milde | moder | seynte | marie,
> Mines | hues | leome | mi leou|e lefdi,
> To the | ich buwe | and mi|ne kneon | ich beie,
> And al | min heor|te blod | to the | ich offrie
>   (*Orison of Our Lady* (1200))

(*b*) Expansion of octosyllable in single line

> And nu|tes amig|deles | thoron|ne numen
>   (*Genesis and Exodus,* 3840 (*c* 1250))

(*c*) In couplet

> And swore | by Je|su that | made moon | and star
> Agenst | the Sara|cens he | should learn | to war
>   (*Richard Cœur de Lion,* 2435 36 (before 1325 ?))

(*d*) Overflow of octosyllable into decasyllable , probably, in the first place, from the equivalenced lines lending themselves to another run

> The bugh|es er | the ar|mes with | the handes,
> And the | legges, | with the | fete | that standes
>   (In Hampole's *Prick of Conscience,* 680, 681
>   (before 1350), with scores of others)

XI LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

The Alliterative Revival—Pure

The examples of this revival (see Book II) cannot, of course, in their nature, be strictly *scanned* But it is

important to bring out the change of *rhythm* as compared
with the older examples (*v sup* p 37)

(To prevent confusion with positive *metrical* scansion, I
have made the scanning bars dotted, and have doubled the
foot-division line for the middle pause in the first extract)

> Hit bifel   in that fo   rest ‖ there fast   by-side,
> Ther woned   a wel old cherl | | that was   a couherde
> > (*William of Palerne*)

(Notice that the *nisus* towards anapæstic cadence over-
runs the break both in the metre and, as at "-glent,"
" stor," " -port " below, in the half line)

> Wende, wor thelych wyght   vus won ez to seche,
> Dryf ouer   this dymme wa ter if thou   druye findez,
> Bryng bod worde to bot   blysse   to vus alle
> > (*Cleanness*)

> Thenne ho gef   hym god-day   and wyth a   glent laghed,
> And as ho stod   ho stonyed hym   with ful   stor wordes,
> " Now he that spedes   uche spech   this dis port yelde,
> Bot that ye   be Gaw ayn hit gotz   in mynde "
> > (*Gawain and the Green Knight*)

XII. LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

The Alliterative Revival—Mixed

The metrical *additions*, on the other hand (see Book II),
and those poems which, while employing alliteration, sub-
ject it to metrical schemes, scan perfectly, as

> Quen thay | hade play|ed in halle,
> As long|e as her wyll|e hom last,
> To cham|bre he con | hym calle
> And to | the chem|ne thay past.
>
> .   .   .
> " A' mon | how may | thou slepe,
> This mor|ning es | so clere ?"
> He watz | in droup|ing depe
> Bot thenne | he con | hir here
> > (" Wheels " of *Gawain and the Green Knight.*)

Fro spot | my spyryt | ther sprang | in space,
My bo|dy on balk|e ther bod | in sweven,
My gost|e is gon | in God|es grace,
In a|ventur|e ther mer|vayles meven
<div align="right">(*The Pearl*, ii)</div>

Mone | makeles | of mighte,
Here co|mes ane er|rant knighte,
Do him | reson|e and righte
For thi | manhead
(" Wheel " of *The Awntyrs of Arthur*, xxvii)

XIII   LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

Potentially Metrical Lines in Langland (see Book II)

Decasyllables

For Ja|mes the gen|tel bond | it in | his book
<div align="right">(A i 159)</div>

Thus I | live lov|eless lik|e a lu|ther dogge
<div align="right">(A v 97)</div>

Alexandrines

And ser|ved Treu|the soth|lyche | somdel | to paye
<div align="right">(C viii 189)</div>

Adam | and A|braham | and Y|say the | prophete
<div align="right">(B xvi 81)</div>

Fourteeners

But if | he wor|che well | there-with | as Do|wel him | techeth
<div align="right">(B viii 56)</div>

Of a|ny sci|ence un|der son|ne the se|ven arts | and alle
<div align="right">(B xi 166)</div>

A large number might be added where the pronuncia-
tion which was shortly to come in necessarily makes such
lines, though they may not have been intended as such , for
instance—

Take we | her words | at worth, | for her | witness | be true ;
<div align="right">(B xii 125)</div>

and even octosyllables will appear—

Ne no say robe in rich[e] pelure ,
<div align="right">(A iii 277)</div>
<div align="right">E</div>

partly explaining to us the chaos of lines in fifteenth-century poetry

XIV   LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

Scansions from Chaucer

Octosyllable

> Hit was | of Ve|nus re|dely,
> This tem|ple , for | in por|treyture,
> I saw | anoon | right hir | figure
> Na|ked fle|tynge in | a see
> And al|so on | hir heed, | parde,
> Hir ro|se gar|lond white | and reed,
> And | hir comb | to kemb|e hir heed,
> Hir dow|ves, and | daun Cu|pido,
> Hir blin|de son|e, and Vul|cano,
> That in | his fa|ce was | ful broun
>   (*House of Fame*, i 130 139)

(*Two* "acephalous" lines, initial monosyllabic feet, or trochaic admixtures , some unimportant elisions before vowels and *h ,* middle pause not kept in lines 1, 4, 6, and 10)

Rhyme-royal

> And down | from then|nès faste | he gan | avise
> This li|tel spot | of erthe | that with | the see
> Embra|cèd is, | and ful|ly gan | despise
> This wrec|ched world, | and held | al vanite,
> To re|spect of | the pleyne | feli|cite
> That is | in heven|e above   And at | the laste
> Ther he | was slayn | his lo|king down | he caste
>   (*Troilus and Criseyde*, v 1814-20)

(Metre quite regular, but pause much varied—practically *none* in line 5   Elisions as above, but *e*'s not valued, or elided, in *erthe, pleyne*   Final couplet hendecasyllabic, as indeed most are)

(*a*) Riding rhyme or heroic couplet

> Whan that | April|le with | his shou|res soote
> The droght|e of March | hath per|ced to | the roote,
> And bath|ed ev|ery veyn|e in swich | licour   •
> Of which | vertu ꝫ engen|dred is | the fleur ,

Whan Ze|phirus | eek with | his swe|te breeth
Inspi|red hath | in ev|ery holt | and heeth
The ten|dre crop|pes, and | the yon|ge sonne
Hath in | the Ram | his half|e cours | y ronne,
And smal|e fowel|es ma|ken me|lodye,
That sle|pen al | the nyght | with o|pen eye,—
So pri|keth hem | Nature | in hir | corages,—
Thanne long|en folk | to goon | on pil|grimages,
And pal|meres for | to se|ken straun|ge strondes,
To fer|ne hal|wes, kowth|e in son|dry londes ,
And spec|ially, | from ev|ery shi|res ende
Of En|gelond, | to Caun|terbury | they wende,
The hoo|ly blis|ful mar|tir for | to seke
That hem | hath hol|pen whan | that they | were seeke
                        (Opening paragraph of *Canterbury Tales*)

(Very regular, but possible trisyllabic feet wherever "every" occurs, and a certain one in "Caunt|erbury| " Pause almost indifferently at 4th and 5th syllables French-Latin accent in " Natùre " Many hendecasyllables or redundances , but all made by the *e* in one form or another)

(*b*) " Acephalous " or nine-syllable lines

Twen|ty bo|kes clad | in blak | or reed   (*Prol* 274)

(*c*) Alexandrines ·

Westward, | right swich | ano|ther in | the op|posite
                                    (*K T* 1036)
So sor|weful|ly eek | that I | wende ver|raily
                                    (*Sq T* 585)

XV LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

Variations from Strict Iambic Norm in Gower

(*a*) Trochaic substitution

                    — ∪
        Under | the gren|e thei | begrave
                        (*Conf Am* i. 2348)

(*b*) Anapæstic substitution

        Sometime | in cham|bre sometime | in haile
                                (iv 1331)
        Of Je|lousi|e, but what | it is
                                (v 447)

(*if the dissyllabic " ie " is insisted on*) `

> And thus | ful oft|e about|e the hal₅
> <div align="right">(v 2514)</div>
> It was | fantosm|e but yet | he heard
> <div align="right">(v 5011)</div>

(It will be observed that in these four instances, all acknowledged by Professor Macaulay, the final *e* is required to make the trisyllabic foot, though the first instance differs slightly from the others. I should myself add a large number where Mr Macaulay sees only "slur," but in which occur words like "ever" (1 3), "many a" (1 316, 317), or syllables like "eth," which *must* be valued in one case at least here—

> To brek*eth* and renn*eth* al aboute,   (*Prol* 505)

where Mr Macaulay reads "tobrekth," and where the copyists very likely made it so)

(*c*) Acephalous lines

Very rare if the *e* be always allowed   Perhaps non-existent.

XVI Transition Period

Examples of Break-down in Literary Verse

(*a*) Lydgate's decasyllabic couplet

> Ther he | lay to | the lar|ke song [∪ —]
> With no|tès herd|è high | up in | the ayr
> The glad|è mor|owe ro|dy and | right fayr,
> Phe|bus al|so cast|ing up | his bemes
> The high|e hyl|les ∧ | gilt with | his stremes
> <div align="right">(*Story of Thebes*, 1250 *sqq*)</div>

(3, tolerable , 2, ditto, with hiatus at cæsura , 1, last foot missing , 4, "acephalous" , 5, syllable missing at cæsura)

(*b*) His rhyme-royal

> This is | to sein | —douteth | never | a dele—
> That ye | shall have | ∧ ful | posses|sion
> Of him | that ye | ∧ cher|rish now | so wel,
> In hon|est man|er, without|e offen|cioun,
> Because | I know|e your | enten|cion
> Is tru|li set | in par|ti and | in al
> To loue | him best | and most | in spe|cial
> <div align="right">(*Temple of Glass*, st 16)</div>

(*Two* examples (2 and 3) of the so-called " Lydgatian " missing syllable at cæsura)

(*c*) A typical minor, John Metham, in *Amoryus and Cleopes*, stanza 1

The charms | of love | and eke | the peyn | of Amo|ryus | the knyght
For Cleo|pes sake | and eke | how bothe | in fere
Lovyd | and af|tyr deyed, | my pur|pos ys | to indight
And now, | O god|dess, I thee | beseche | off kun|ning that | have | syche
    might,
Help me | to adorne | ther charms | in syche | maner
So that | qwere this | matere | doth yt | require
Bothe ther | lovys I | may compleyne | to loverys | desire

(A fourteener, a decasyllable, an Alexandrine, a *six*teener, and three decasyllables, the last very shaky either as that or as an Alexandrine [1] In fact, sheer doggerel of the unintended kind)

XVII Transition Period

Examples of True Prosody in Ballad, Carols, etc.

(*a*) *Chevy Chase ·*

> The Per|cy out | of Northum|berland,
> And a vow | to God | made he,
> That he | would hunt | in the moun|tains
> Of Chev|iot within | days three,
> In the mau|gre of dough|ty Doug|las
> And all | that ever with | him be

(It must be observed that this modern spelling *exactly* represents the old prosodically The reader will then see that there are no liberties, on the equivalent system, except the *crasis* of " -viot " and " ever " The former, insignificant in any case, is still more so here, for the actual Northumbrian pronunciation is or was " Chevot "; while if " ever " changes places with " that," there is not even·any crasis needed For a piece so rough in phrase, and copied by a person so evidently illiterate, the exactness is astonishing)

(*b*) "E I O"

> To doom | we draw | the sooth | to schaw
>   In life | that us | was lent,
> Ne la|tin, ne law, | may help | ane haw,[1]
>   But rath|ely us | repent
> The cross, | the crown, | the spear | bees bown,
>   That Je|su rug|ged and rent,
> The nail|ès rude, | shall thee | conclude
>   With their | own ar|gument
>   With E | and O take keep | thereto,
>   As Christ | himself | us kenned
>   We com|e and go | to weal | or woe,
>   That dread|ful doom | shall end

(Spelling modernised as before, but not a word altered)

XVIII Transition Period

Examples of Skeltonic and other Doggerel

(*a*) Skelton

I

Mirry | Marga|ret
As mid|somer flower,
Gen|tyll as fau|coun
Or hauke | of the tower—
With sol|ace and glad|ness,
Much mirth | and no mad|ness,
All good | and no bad|ness —
So joy|ously,
So maid|enly,
So wom|anly
Her de|menyng
In ev|ery thyng
Far far | passyng
That I | can indite
Or suffyce | to write
      (*Crown of Laurel*)

II

But to make | up my tale,
She bru|eth nop|py ale,
And ma|kethe there|of sale,
To travel|lers, || to tink|ers,
To sweat|ers, || to swink|ers,
And all | good || ale-drink|ers
That will noth|ing spare
But dryncke | till they stare
And bring | themselves bare,
With "now | away | the mare,
And let | us slay Care,
As wise | as an hare "
      (*Elinor Rumming.*)

(*b*) Examples from Heywood and other interludes.

(1) Continuous long doggerel

> I can|not tell | you   one knave | disdains | another,
> Wherefore | take ye | the tone | and I | shall take | the other

---

[1] As in " hips and haws "

We shall | bestow | them there | as is most | conven|ient
For such | a coup|le   I trow | they shall | repent
That ev|er they met | in this | church here

(2) Singles

(Shortened six)
This | wyse him | deprave,

(Octosyllable)
And give | the ab|solu|tion

(Irregular decasyllable)
The aboun|dant grace | of the | powèr | divyne

(Alexandrine)
Preserve | this aud|ience | and leave | them to | inclyne

(Irregular fourteener)
Then hold | down thine | head like | a pret|ty man |
and take | my blessing.

(In all these examples the doggerel is probably *intended*,
that is to say, the writers are not aiming at a regularity
which they cannot reach, but cheerfully or despairingly
renouncing it)

XIX TRANSITION PERIOD

Examples from the Scottish Poets

(*a*) Barbour (regular octosyllables)

The kyng | toward | the vod | is gane,
Wery, | for-swat | and vill | of vayn ,
Intill | the wod | soyn en|terit he,
And held | doun to|ward a | valè,
Quhar throu | the vod | a vat|tir ran
Thiddir | in gret | hy went | he than,
And | begouth | to rest | hym thair,
And said | he mycht | no for|thirmair

(*One* "acephalous " line)

(*b*) Wyntoun (octosyllables somewhat freer) ·

Thir sev|yn kyng|is reg|nand were
A hun|der ful|ly *and for*|ty year,
And fra | thir kyng|is thus | can cess
In Ro|me thai che|*sit twa con*|sulès

(IV ii 157-160.)

(*c*) Blind Harry (regular decasyllables on French model)

Than Wal|lace socht | quhar his | wncle | suld þe ,
In a | dyrk cawe | he was | set|dul|fullè,
Quhar wat|ter stud, | and he | in yrn|yss strang
Wallace | full sone | the brass|is wp | he dang ,
Off that | myrk holl | brocht him | with strenth | and lyst,
Bot noyis | he hard, | off no|thing ellis | he wyst
So blyth | befor | in warld | he had | nocht beyn,
As thair | with sycht, | quhen he | had Wal|lace seyn

(*d*) James I (rhyme-royal)

For wak|it and | for-wal|owit, thus | musing,
  Wery | forlain | I list|enyt sod|dynlye,
And sone | I herd | the bell | to ma|tyns ryng,
  And up | I rase, | no lon|ger wald | I lye
  Bot soon, | how trow|e ye ? Suich | a fan|tasye
Fell me | to mynd | that ay | me thoght | the bell
  Said to | me, " Tell | on, man, | what the | befell "

(*e*) Henryson (ballad measure , slight anapæstic sub-
stitution)

Makyne, | the night | is soft | and dry,
  The wed|*dir is warm* | and fair,
And the gre|nè wuid | richt neir | us by
  To walk | out on | all quhair
Thair ma | na jan|gloor us | espy,
  That is | to lufe | contrair,
Thairin, | Makyne, | bath ye | and I
  Unseen | we ma | repair

Those who deny the valued *e* in " grenè," as not Scots,
may refuse the second instance of trisyllabic feet, but the
first will remain

(*f*) Dunbar (alliterative) .

I saw thre gay ladeis sit in ane grein arbeir,
All grathit into garlandis of fresche gudelie flouris ;
So glitterit as the gold wer thair glorius gilt tressis,
Quhill all the gressis did gleme of the glaid hewis ,
Kemmit was thair cleir hair, and curiouslie sched
Attour thair schulderis doun schyre, schyning full bricht.

Dunbar (dimeter iambic quatrains with refrain, and
much anapæstic substitution)

Come ne|vir yet May | so fresch|e and grene,
Bot Jan|uar come | als wud and kene—
We¬|nev|ir sic drowth | bot anis | come raine,
All erd|ly joy | returnis | in pane.

(*g*) Alexander Scott (stanzas)

It cumis | yow luv|aris to | be laill,
Of bo|dy, hairt | and mynd | al haill,
And though | ye with | year la|dyis daill—
Ressoun ,
Bot and | your faith | and law|ty faill—
Tiessoun '

. .

Be land | or se,
Quhaur ev|ir I be,
As ye | fynd me,
So tak | me ,
And gif | I le,
And from | yow fle,
Ay quhill | I de
Forsaik | me '

(*h*) Montgomerie (*Cherry and Slae* stanza)

About | ane bank | quhair birdis | on bewis
Ten thou|sand tymis | thair notis | renewis
Ilke houre | into | the day,
The merle | and ma|ueis micht | be sene,
The Prog|ne and | the Phel|omene,
Quhilk caus|sit me | to stay
I lay | and leynit | me to | ane bus
To heir | the bir|dis beir ,
Thair mirth | was sa | melo|dious
Throw na|ture of | the yeir ,
Sum sing|ing, || some spring|ing
With wingis | into | the sky,
So trim|lie, || and nim|lie,
Thir birdis | they flew | me by

XX   Early Elizabethan Period

Examples of Reformed Metre from Wyatt, Surrey,
and other Poets before Spenser

(*a*) Wyatt (sonnet)

The long[e] | love that | in my | thought I | harbèr
And in | my heart | doth keep | his re|sidence,

Into | my face | presseth | with bold | pretence,
And there | campèth | display|ing his | bannèr
She that | me learns | to love | and to | suffèr,
And wills | that my | trust and | lust[e]s neg|ligence
Be rein|ed by rea|son, shame, | and rev|erence,
With his | hardi|ness tak|ès dis|pleasùre,
Wherewith | love to | the hart[e]s | forest | he fleèth,
Leaving | his en|terprise | with pain | and cry,
And there | him hi|deth and | not àp|pearèth |
What may | I do ? | when my | master | feareth,
But in | the field | with him | to live | and die,
For good | is thè | life | end|ing faithfully

(I formerly scanned line 9

Wherewith | love to | the hart's fo|rest he | fleèth

But "forèst" is so frequent and makes such a much better rhythm that perhaps it should be preferred   It will, however, emphasise still further the poet's curious uncertainty about the "*-eth*" rhymes—whether he shall arrange them on that syllable only, or take in the penultimate Besides this point, the student should specially notice the pains taken to get, not merely the feet, but the syllables right at the cost sometimes of pretty strongly "wrenched" accent   On all this see Book II   The final *e*'s are rather a curiosity than important   longè *may* have been sounded, "lust*e*" and "hart*e*" (so printed in Tottel) improbably)

(*b*) Wyatt (lyric stanza)

Forget | not yet | the tried | intent
Of such | a truth | as I | have meant,
My great | travail, | so glad|ly spent,
　　Forget | not yet !

Forget | not yet | when first | began
The wea|ry life | ye know, | since whan
The suit, | the ser|vice, none | tell can—
　　Forget | not yet !

(It will be observed that this rondeau-like motion, with its short lines and frequent repetition, is brought off better than the sonnet, though the French accent sticks in *travail*)

(*c*) Surrey (sonnet):

> I nev|er sşw | my la|dy lay | apart
> Her cor|net black, | in cold | nor yet | in heat,
> Sith first | she knew | my grief | was grown | so great ,
> Which o|ther fan|cies dri|veth fiom | my heart,
> That to | myself | I do | the thought | reserve,
> The which | unwares | did wound | my woe|ful breast.
> But on | her face | mine eyes | mought ne|ver rest
> Yet, since | she knew | I did | her love, | and serve
> Her gold|en tress|es clad | alway | with black,
> Her smil|ing looks | that hid[es] | thus ev|ermore
> And that | restrains | which I | desire | so sore.
> So doth | this cor|net gov|ern me, | alack !
> In sum|mer sun, | in win|ter's breath, | a frost
> Whereby | the lights | of her | fair looks | I lost

(Observe how much more surely and lightly the younger poet treads in the uncertain pioneer footsteps of the elder)

(*d*) Surrey (" poulter's measure ")

> Good la|dies, ye | that have ‖ your pleas|ures in | exile,
> Step in | your foot, | come take | a place | and mourn | with me | a while,
> And such | as by | their lords ‖ do set | but lit|tle price,
> Let them | sit still, | it skills | them not | what chance | come on the dice |
> But ye | whom love | hath bound ‖ by or|der of | desire
> To love | your lords, | whose good | deserts | none oth|er would | require,
> Come ye | yet once | again ‖ and set | your foot | by mine,
> Whose wo|ful plight | and sor|rows great | no tongue | can even | define

(Very little to be said for it, except as a school of regular rhythm Broken up into " short measure " (6, 6, 8, 6) it has been not ineffective in hymns)

(*e*) Gascoigne (lyric stanza)

> Sing lull|aby, | as wom|en do,
> Wherewith | they bring | their babes | to rest,
> And lull|aby | can I | sing too,
> As wom|anly | as can | the best
> With lull|aby | they still | the child ,
> And if | I be | not much | beguiled,
> Full ma|ny wan|ton babes | have I
> Which must | be stilled | with lull|aby

(*f*) Turberville (lyric stanza)

> As I | in this | have done | your will,
>   And mind | to do,
> So I | request | you to | fulfil
>   My fan|cy too,
> A green | and lov|ing heart | to have,
> And this | is all | that I | do crave

(Observe in both of these the absolute syllabic regularity, and *observance* of foot-rhythm)

XXI   SPENSER [1] AT DIFFERENT PERIODS

(*a*) *Shep Kal* (strict stanza):

> Thou bar|ren ground, | whom win|ter's wrath | has wasted,
> Art made | a mir|ror to | behold | my plight
> Whilome | thy fresh | spring flower'd, | and af|ter hasted
> Thy sum|mer proud, | with daf|fodil|lies dight ,
>   And now | is come | thy win|ter's storm|y state,
>   Thy man|tle marr'd | wherein | thou mask|edst late.

(Regular iambs throughout   One double rhyme)

(*b*) *Shep Kal* (equivalenced octosyllable—*Christabel* or *Genesis and Exodus* metre) .

> His harm|ful hat|chet he hent | in hand,
>
> (Alas ' | that it | so read|y should stand ')
> And to | the field | alone | he speedeth,
> (Aye lit|tle help | to harm | there needeth ')
>
> Anger | nould let | him speak | to the tree,
>
> Enaun|ter his rage | mought cool|ed bee ;
>
> But to | the root bent | his sturd|y stroke,
>
> And made | many wounds | in the | waste oak.
> The ax|e's edge | did oft turne | again,
>
> As half | unwill|ing to cut | the grain
> Seemed | the sense|less ir|on did fear,

_____

[1] From Spenser onward the spelling is modern

Or to | wrong ho|ly eld | did forbear—
For it | had been | an an|cient tree,
        ˘ ˘ ‾
Sacred | with ma|ny a mys|tery,
And of|ten crossèd | with the pries|tès cruise
And of|ten hal|lowed with ho|ly wa|ter dews

(Observe that this last is the only distinct, if not the only *possible*, decasyllabic couplet, while it can become an Alexandrine by valuing "hal|lowèd"|, and that "priestès" is the only attempt at valued Chaucerian *e*)

(*c*) *Shep Kal* (equivalenced stanza)
         ˘ ˘ ‾
Bring hi|ther the pink | and pur|ple col|umbine,
    With gil|lyflowers ,
Bring cor|ona|tions | and sops | in wine,
        ˘ ˘ ‾
    Worn of | paramours
Strow me | the ground | with daf|fadown|dillies,[1]
And cow|slips and | kingcups | and lov|ed lil|lies
    The pret|ty paunce,
    And the chev|isaunce,
Shall match | with the fair | flow'r delice

It may be just desirable to remind the student that a final "-ion" is commonly dissyllabic in the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries "Worn of par|amours " is possible

(*d*) "Spenserian " stanza (occasional, but mostly slight, equivalence. Pause in ll 1-8 at discretion , in 9 usually at middle, but, as in the following, not always)
So pass|eth, in | the pass|ing of | a day
Of mor|tal life, | the leaf, | the bud, | the flower ,
No more | doth flour|ish af|ter first | decay
That erst | was sought | to deck | both bed | and bower
   ˘ ˘‾ ˘ ˘ ‾ ˘ ˘ ‾
Of ma|ny a la|dy and ma|ny a par|amour '

---

[1] Spenser here takes (as he sometimes continued to do even in *F Q*) the liberty of shifting the rhyming syllable There is no doubt that this is not a good liberty But in struggling out of the fifteenth - century slough Wyatt was constantly driven to it, and it was not till the seventeenth that poets recognised the fact that the easement was more of a disfigurement than it was worth.

Gather, | therefore, | the rose | while yet | is prime,
For soon | comes age | that will | her pride | deflower
Gather | the rose | of love | whilst yet | is time,
Whilst lov|ing thou | mayst lov|èd be | with e|qual crime

(*e*) *Mother Hubberd's Tale* (antithetic and stopped
heroic couplet)

Full lit|tle know|est thou | that hast | not tried,
What hell | it is, | in su|ing long | to bide
To lose | good days | that might | be bet|ter spent ;
To waste | long nights | in pen|sive dis|content ,
To speed | to-day, | to be | put back | to morrow ,
To feed | on hope, | to pine | with fear | and sorrow ,
To have | thy Prin|ce's grace, | yet want | her Peer's ,
To have | thy ask|ing, yet | wait ma|ny years ,
To fret | thy soul | with cross|es and | with cares ,
To eat | thy heart | through com|fortless | despairs,
To fawn, | to crouch, | to wait, | to ride, | to run,
To spend, | to give, | to want, | to be | undone

(*f*) *Epithalamion* (elaborate quasi-Pindaric stanza con-
certed in different line length, but almost strictly iambic ,
" the," etc., before a vowel being probably elided)

Open | the tem|ple gates | unto | my Love,
Open | them wide | that she | may en|ter in,
And all | the posts | adorn | as doth | behove,
And all | the pil|lars deck | with gar|lands trim,
For to | receive | this Saint | with hon|our due,
That com|eth in | to you
With trem|bling steps, | and hum|ble rev|erence,
She com|eth in, | before | th' Almight|y's view
Of her, | ye vir|gins, learn | obe|dience,
When so | ye come, | into | those ho|ly places,
To hum|ble your | proud faces
Bring her | up to | th' High Al|tar, that | she may
The sa|cred ce|remo|nies there | partake
The which | do end|less ma|trimo|ny make ;
And let | the roar|ing or|gans loud|ly play
The prai|ses of | the Lord | in live|ly notes,
The whiles | with hol|low throats
The cho|risters | the joy|ous an|them sing,
That all | the woods | may an|swer, and | their ech|o ring !

XXII Examples of the Development of Blank Verse

(a) *Surrey* (translation of *Aeneid*)

It was | the night , | the sound | and qui|et sleep
Had through | the earth | the wear|y bod|ies caught,
The woods, | the ra|ging seas, | were fallen | to rest,
When that | the stars | had half | their course | declined
The fields | whist beasts | and fowls | of di|vers hue,
And what | so that | in the | broad lakes | remained,
Or yet | among | the bush|y thicks | of briar,
Laid down | to sleep | by sil|ence of | the night,
'Gan swage | their cares, | mindless | of tra|vails past
Not so | the spirit | of this | Phenic|ian
Unhappy she | that on | no sleep | could chance,
Nor yet | night's rest | enter | in eye | or breast
Her cares | redoub|le | love | doth rise | and rage | again,
And ov|erflows | with swell|ing storms | of wrath

(The interest of the new mode here is manifold The lines are almost wholly " single-moulded," the author's anxiety to keep himself right without rhyme necessitating this The cæsura at the fourth syllable is *almost* always kept, according to the tradition of the French line *Once* (in the penultimate line) he has to overflow , but into an Alexandrine, not into the next line Whether by intention or not—" sprite " being possible—he *once* discovers the enormous advantage of the trisyllabic foot [1] *Once* he makes with "rest" and "breast" the oversight of a " Leonine " rhyme But, on the whole, the success is remarkable for a beginning , and there are indications of what has to be done to secure the end)

(b) First dramatic attempts—*Gorboduc* onwards

Sackville Your won|ted true | regard | of faith|ful hearts
and Makes me, | O king, | the bold|er to | resume,
Norton To speak | what I | conceive | within | my breast
Although | the same | do not | agree | at all
With that | which o|ther here | my lords | have said,
Nor which | yourself | have seem|ed best | to like
(Gorboduc)

---

[1] " Fallen " is pretty certainly "fall'n,"

Hughes What ' shall | I stand | whiles Ar|thur sheds | my blood ?
and And must | I yield | my neck | unto | the axe ?
others Whom fates | constrain | let him | forego | his bliss
  But he | that need|less yields | unto | his bane
  When he | may shun, | does well | deserve | to lose
  The good | he can|not use | Who would | sustain
  A ba|ser life | that may | maintain | the best ?
        (*Misfortunes of Arthur*)

      ᴗ ᴗ —
Peele. Were ev|ery ship | ten thou|sand on | the seas,
  Manned with | the strength | of all | the eas|tern kings,
  Convey|ing all | the mon|archs of | the world,
    ᴗ ᴗ —
  To invade | the is|land where | her High|ness reigns—
       ᴗ ᴗ —
  'Twere all | in vain | for heav|ens and des|tinies
  Attend | and wait | upon | her Maj|esty '
        (*Battle of Alcazar*)

          ᴗ ᴗ —
Greene Why thinks | King Hen|ry's son | that Mar|garet's love
     ᴗ ᴗ —
  Hangs in | the uncer|tain bal|ance of | proud time ?
  That death | shall make | a dis|cord of | our thoughts ?
  No ' stab | the earl | and ere | the morn|ing sun
  Shall vaunt | him thrice | over | the lof|ty east,
    — ᴗ ᴗ
  Margaret | will meet | her Lac|y in | the heavens '
      (*F Bacon and F Bungay*)

Marlowe Black is | the beau|ty of | the bright|est day '
  The gol|den ball | of Heav|en's eter|nal fire,
  That danced | with glo|ry on | the sil|ver waves,
  Now wants | the glo|ry that | inflamed | his beams
  And all | for faint|ness and | for foul | disgrace,
  He binds | his tem|ples with | a frown|ing cloud,
  Ready | to dark|en earth | with end|less night
        (*Tamburlaine*)

(An extreme stiffness and " single mouldedness " in the lines, modified in Peele and Greene by trisyllabic feet, perhaps not intended as such ("heav'n" was pretty certainly regarded and generally spelt as a monosyllable, and the pronunciations " ev'ry " and " Margret " are old , while " t' invade " and " th' uncertain " would be likely), but virtually so, and inviting, especially in " Margaret," the full and beautiful value. The *Gorboduc* form, as is natural, is

much the least accomplished   It is indeed what, by an almost incomprehensible inversion of sense and nature, some people call "blank verse *according to the rules* "—ten syllables only, five almost strictly iambic feet (= "accent on the even places "), pause near the middle, stop, metrical, if not grammatical, at every end—in fact, the roughest and most rudimentary form possible)

(*c*) Early non-dramatic blanks (Gascoigne)

And on | their backs | they bear | both land | and fee,
Castles | and towers, | reven|ues and | receipts,
Lordships | and ma|nors, fines, |—yea farms|—and all
" What should | these be ? " | (speak you, | my love|ly lord ?)
They be | not men | for why, | they have | no beards
They be | no boys, | which wear | such side|long gowns
They be | no gods, | for all | their gal|lant gloss
They be | no devils, | I trow, | which seem | so saintish
What be | they ? wom|en ? mask|ing in | men's weeds
With dutch|kin doub|lets and | with jerk|ins jagged ?
With Span|ish spangs, | and ruffs | set out | of France,
With high | copt hats | and feath|ers flaunt-|a-flaunt ?
They be, | so sure, | even *woe* | to *men* | indeed

(It will be noticed that the "single-moulded" character is even more noticeable here than in drama, and is emphasised by the *epanaphora*   There is one redundance —"saintish" ("jagged" is probably "jagg'd'), and, as we know that the author thought the iamb the only English foot, we must not read "rĕvĕnue," but, with "tow'rs," "revènue"—which indeed was, by precisians, regarded as the correct pronunciation not so very long ago)

(*d*) Perfected "single-mould"

Peele   Come, gen|tle Ze|phyr, trick'd | with those | perfumes
That erst | in E|den sweet|en'd Ad|am's love,
And stroke | my bos|om with | thy silk|en fan
This shade, | sun-proof, | is yet | no proof | for thee ,
Thy bo|dy, smooth|er than | this wave|less spring,
And pu|rer than | the sub|stance of | the same,
Can creep | through that | his lan|ces can|not pierce
Thou, and | thy sis|ter, soft | and sa|cred Air,
Goddess | of life, | and gov|erness | of health,
Keep ev|ery fount|ain fresh | and ar|bour sweet ;

F

No bra|zen gate | her pas|sage can | repulse,
Nor bush|y thick|et bar | thy sub|tle breath
Then deck | thee with | thy loose | delight|some robes,
And on | thy wings | bring del|icate | perfumes,
To play | the wan|ton with | us through | the leaves
                    (*David and Bethsabe*)

Marlowe   If all | the pens | that ev|er po|ets held
Had fed | the feel|ing of | their mas|ters' thoughts,
And ev|ery sweet|ness that | inspir'd | their hearts,
Their minds, | and mu|ses, on | admirèd | themes ,
If all | the heav|enly quint|essence | they 'still
From their | immort|al flowers | of po|esy,
Wherein | as in | a mir|ror we | perceive
The high|est reach|es of | a hu|man wit ,
If these | had made | one po|em's per|iod,
And all | combined | in beau|ty's worth|iness,
Yet should | there hov|er in | their rest|less heads
One thought, | one grace, | one won|der at | the least,
Which in|to words | no vir|tue can | digest
                    (*Tamburlaine*)

(These passages, despite their extreme poetical beauty,
are still prosodically immature.   Even when, as in the last,
there are lines with no technical " stop " at the end, as at
" held " and " heads," the grammatical incompleteness does
not interfere with the rounding off of the prosodic period
or sub-period   Marlowe (*v inf*) could enjamb *couplet*
beautifully, but not blank verse   Note also that the lines
are strictly decasyllabic, the only hints at trisyllabic feet
being in words like "Heaven," then regularly a monosyllable,
" every," and " flowers ")

(*e*) Shakespeare

(1) Early single-moulded

Upon | his blood|y fin|ger he | doth wear
A pre|cious ring, | that light|ens all | the hole,
Which, like | the ta|per in | some mon|ument,
Doth shine | upon | the dead | man's earth|y cheeks,
And shows | the rag|ged en|trails of | the pit
                    (*Titus Andronicus*)

(Same remarks applying as to the last citation)˙

(2) Beginning of perfected stage :

Why art | thou yet | so fair? | shall I | believe
, That un|substan|tial death | is am|orous,
And that | the lean | abhor|rèd mon|ster keeps
Thee here | in dark | to be | his par|amour ?
For fear | of that, | I still | will stay | with thee
And ne|ver from | this pal|ace of | dim night
Depart | again | here, here | will I | remain
With worms | that are | thy cham|ber-maids , O, | here
Will I | set up | my ev|erlast|ing rest.
And shake | the yoke | of in|auspic|ious stars
From this | world-wear|ied flesh

(Romeo and Juliet)

(No trisyllabic feet yet, and no redundance but, by shift of pause and completer juncture of lines, the paragraph effect solidly founded)

(3) Further process in the same direction

Nay, || but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure || those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files | and musters of the war
Have glowed like plated Mars, || now bend, | now turn,
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front || his captain's heart,
Which | in the scuffles of great fights | hath burst
The buckles on his breast, || rene[a]g[u]es all temper,
And is become | the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust

(Antony and Cleopatra)

(Here the double division marks indicate stronger, and the single lighter, *pauses*—not, as usually in the latter case, *feet* The variation of the pause for paragraph effect is here consummate , but the verse, as its conditions require, is of the severer type)

(4) Perfection in passion

Blow winds, | and crack | your cheeks ' | rage ' | blow '
You cat|aracts | and hur|rica|noes, spout
Till you | have drench'd | our stee|ples, drown'd | the cocks !
You sul|phurous and | thought-ex|ecut|ing fires,
Vaunt-cour|iers to | oak-cleav|ing thun|derbolts,
Singe my | white head ' | And thou, | all-shak|ing thunder,

Smite flat | the thick | rotund|ity o' | the world '
Crack na|ture's moulds, | all ger|mens spill | at once,
That make | ingrate|ful man '
(King Lear.)

(Every extension taken   Monosyllabic feet either at the
first "blow" and "winds," or the last, and "rage," perhaps
at both (an Alexandrine)   Trisyllabic at " -phurous and,"
" riers to," and "ity o'"   Redundance at "-ing thun der "
Pause fully played upon as above   enjambment at "spout",
parenthetic enjambment at "fires ")

(5) Perfection in quiet

Our rev|els now | are end|ed   These | our actors,
As I | foretold | you, were | all spir|its, and
Are melt|ed in|to air, | into | thin air
And, like | the base|less fab|ric of | this vision,
The cloud-|capped towers, | the gor|geous pal|aces,
The sol|emn tem|ples, the | great globe | itself,
Yea, all | which it | inher|it, shall | dissolve
And, like | this in|substan|tial pa|geant faded,
Leave not | a rack | behind | We are | such stuff
As dreams | are made | of, and | our lit|tle life
Is round|ed with | a sleep
(The Tempest)

(Not much trisyllabic—the dreaminess not requiring it
A good deal of redundance, and enjambment pushed
nearly to the furthest by taking place at "and "[1])

(*f*) Redundance encroaching.

Beaumont and Fletcher .

" Oh | thou conqu[e]ror,
Thou glo|ry of | the world | once, now | *the pity* :
Thou awe | of na|tions, where|fore didst | *thou fail us* ?
What poor | fate fol|lowed thee, | and plucked | thee on
To trust | thy sa|cred life | to an | *Egyptian* ?
The life | and light | of Rome | to a | *blind stranger*,
That hon|oura|ble war | *ne'er taught* | *a no|bleness*
Nor wor|thy cir|cumstance | show'd what | *a man was* ?

---

[1] For more on Shakespeare's blank verse see the close of this chapter
and the next Book.

That ne|ver heard | thy name | sung but | *in banquets*
And loose | lasciv|ious pleas|ures ? to | a boy
That had | no faith | to com|prehend | *thy greatness,*
No stud|y of | thy life | to know | *thy goodness ?*   .
Egyp|tians, dare | *you think* | *your high* | *pyra|mides*
Built to | out dure | the sun, | as you | suppose,
Where your | unworth|y kings | lie rak'd | *in ashes,*
Are mon|uments fit | for him ' | No, brood | *of Nilus,*
Nothing | can cov|er his | high fame | *but heaven* ;
No pyr|amid | set off | his mem|ories,
But the | eter|nal sub|stance of | *his greatness,*
To which I leave him "

                                            (*The False One*)

(Here it will be seen there are two actual Alexandrines
(*three* if we allow the full value to "con|queror|") and
twelve redundant lines to *four* non-redundant ! The fire
of the poetry fuses this, but cannot always be counted on,
as in the next)

(2) If I | had swelled | the sol|dier, or | *intended*
An act | in per|son lean|ing to | *dishonour,*
As you | would fain | have forced | me, *wit|ness Heaven,*
Where clear|est und|erstand|ing of | *all truth is*
(For men | are spite|ful men, | and know | *no pi[c]ty)*
When O|lin came, | grim O|lin, when | *his marches,* etc , etc ,
      etc

                                            (*The Loyal Subject*)

(Which, with its repetition of stumbling amphibrachic
ends, is rather hideous)

(*g*) Spread of the infection, and complete decay of
blank verse from various causes.

   (1) Shirley
                              I dare,
      With conscience of my pure intent, try what
      Rudeness you find upon my lip, 'tis chaste
      As the desires that breathe upon *my language*
      I began, Felisarda, to *affect thee*
      By seeing thee at prayers ; thy virtue winged
      Love's arrows first, and 'twere a sacrilege
      To choose thee now for sin, that hast a power
      To make | this place | a tem|ple by | thy in|nocence
      I know thy poverty, and came not to
      Bribe it against thy chastity , if thou

Vouchsafe thy fair and honest love, it shall
Adorn my fortunes which shall stoop to serve it
In spite of friends or destiny   ●

(The Brothers)

(Actual *scansion* quite correct, and therefore not marked throughout   Redundance not excessive (" innocence " may be taken as such, and not as making an Alexandrine, if liked) , hardly any, and no misused, trisyllabic feet But enjambment at " what," " to," " thou," and " shall " badly managed)

(2) Suckling

Softly, | as death | itself | comes on
When it | doth steal | away | the sick | man's breath,
And standers-by perceive it not,
Have I trod the way unto their lodgings
How wisely do those powers
That give | us hap|piness or|der it !

(Aglaura)

(A hopeless jumble   The 1st. as a fragment, and 2nd lines are all right, and the 6th could be completed properly.   But 3, 4, and 5—though 3 and 5 *could* come in with other companions—upset any kind of continuous arrangement, and 4 would hardly be good anywhere)

(3) Davenant

Rhodolinda doth become her title
And her birth   Since deprived of popular
Homage, she hath been queen over her great self
In this captivity ne'er passionate
But when she hears me name the king, and then
Her passions not of anger taste but love
Love of her conqueror , he that in fierce
Battle (when the cannon's sulphurous breath
Clouded the day) her noble father slew

(Albovine)

(More hopeless still, and left unscanned for the student's edification)

(*h*) The Miltonic Restoration

Early dramatic experiment   ●

Comus is evidently written under three different in-

fluences, which may be said to be in the main those of
Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Fletcher   The poet often uses
Fletcher's heavy trisyllabic endings—

>   ⌣ ◡ ◡
> Bore a bright golden flower, but not | in this soil ,

and has not infrequent Alexandrines, the most certain
of which is—

> As to | make this | rela|tion
> > Care | and ut|most shifts

But he makes the verse more and more free and
original, as in the following extracts

> Yea, there | where ve|ry des|ola|tion dwells,
> By grots | and ca|verns shagged | with hor|rid shades,
> She may | pass on | with un|blenched maj|esty,
> Be it | not done | in pride | or in | presump|tion
> Some say | no ev|il thing | that walks | by night,
> In fog | or fire, | by lake | or moor|ish fen,
> Blue mea|gre hag, | or stub|born un|laid ghost,
> That breaks | his mag|ic chains | at cur|few time,
> No gob|lin or | swart fa|ery of | the mine,
> Hath hurt|ful power | o'er true | virgin|ity.
> Do ye | believe | me yet, | or shall | I call
> Anti|quity | from the | old schools | of Greece
> To test|ify | the aims | of chas|tity ?
>
> Hence had | the hunt|ress Di|an her | dread bow,
> Fair sil|ver shaft|ed queen | for ev|er chaste,
> Wherewith | she tamed | the brind|ed lioness
> And spot|ted moun|tain pard, | but set | at nought
>   ◡ ◡   —
> The fri|volous bolt | of Cu|pid , gods | and men
>
>   ◡ ◡   —
> Feared her | stern frown, | and she | was queen | o' the woods
>
>   Methought it was the sound
> Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
> Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
> Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,
> When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
> In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
> And thank the gods amiss

(The full comments given on previous passages make

it unnecessary to annotate this much   The last passage
has the full paragraph combination [1])

XXIII   Examples of Elizabethan Lyric

(*a*) Prae-Spenserian

> Not light | of love, la|dy,
> Though fan|cy do prick | thee,
> Let con|stancy | possess | thy heart
> Well wor|thy of blam|yng
> They be | and defam|ing,
> From plight|ed troth | which back | do start
>   Dear dame !
> Then fick|leness ban|ish
> And fol|ly extin|guish,
> Be skil|ful in guid|ing,
> And stay | thee from slid|ing
>   And stay | thee,
>   And stay | thee !
>   (*Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578))

(Anapæstic substitution (if not definite anapæstic base)
arising doubtless rather from *tune* than from deliberate
prosodic purpose ; but quite prosodically correct, and sure
to propagate itself)

(*b*) Post-Spenserian

> My bon|ny lass, | thine eye,
>   So sly
> Hath made | me sor|row so—
> Thy crim|son cheeks, | my dear,
>   So clear,
> Have so | much wrought | my woe,
>   (*Phœnix Nest* (1593))

(Pure iambics , effect produced by short "bob"
rhymes)

(*c*) Ben Jonson (strict common measure)

> ‾ ‿
> Drink to | me on|ly with | thine eyes
> And I | will pledge | with mine ,
> Or leave | a kiss | but in | the cup
> And I'll | not look | for wine

---

[1] For *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes, v inf*
Book II

The thirst | that from | the soul | doth rise
    Doth ask | a drink | divine ,
But might | I of | Jove's nec|tar sip,
    I would | not change | for thine

(As mostly with Ben, strict iambics, save for the opening trochee, and something like a spondee in " Jove's nec- " The wonderful effect which he, or Donne, or the Spirit of the Age, taught to the next two generations is produced entirely by careful choice and fingering of the words and rhymes)

(*d*) Ben Jonson (anapæstic measure)

See the cha|riot at hand | here of Love !
    Wherein | my La|dy rid|eth
Each that draws | is a swan | or a dove,
    And well | the car | Love guid|eth
As she goes, | all hearts | do du|ty
    Unto | her beau|ty ,
And enam|oured do wish, | so they might
    But enjoy | such a sight,
That they still | were to run | by her side
Th[o]rough ponds, | th[o]rough seas, | whither she | would ride

(" Through," as often, is probably to be valued " thorough," and " chariot " was generally " chawyot " or " charret "   It will be observed that although this is fine it is slightly laboured   The age was hardly at ease with the anapæst as yet)

(*e*) Campion (selections)

(1) Classical	*English* *anacreontic*	Follow, | follow, Though with | mischief Armed like | whirlwind How she | flies still.
	English *elegiac*	Constant | to none, | but ev|er false | to me, Traitor | still to | love through thy | false desires, Not hope | of pit|y now, | nor vain | redress, Turns my | grief to | tears and re|newed la|ments.
	English *iambic*	Rose-|cheeked Lau|ra, come , Sing | thou smooth|ly with | thy beauty's Sil|ent mu|sic, ei|ther other Sweet|ly gracing.

<div style="margin-left:2em">

— ◡ — ◡ — ◡ — ◡   — ◡
Follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow '

◡ — ◡ — ◞ —
Though thou | be black as night,
And she | made all | of light,
Yet fol|low thy | fair sun, | unhap|py shadow '

(2) Natural

Break now, | my heart, | and die ' | O no, | she may | relent—
Let my | despair | prevail ' | O stay, | hope is | not spent
Should she | now fix | one smile | on thee, | where were |
    despair ?
The loss | is but ea|sy which smiles | can repair ,
A stran|ger would please | thee, if she | were as fair

</div>

The student should require little assistance here, odd
as some of the rhythms may seem But " Rose-cheeked
Laura " ought to be *trochaically* scanned, and will then be
naturally " English " Nothing can make the " English
elegiac " harmonious Note that line 3 of " Break now "
may be anapæstic like 4 and 5

◡   ◡ —   ◡ ◡ —
Should she now | fix one smile, etc [1]

XXIV EARLY CONTINUOUS ANAPÆSTS

(*a*) Tusser (1st ed 1557 , complete, 1573)

Now leeks | are in sea|son for pot|tage full good,
And spar|eth the milch | cow and purg|eth the blood
These hav|ing with pea|son for pot|tage in Lent,
Thou spar|est both oat|meal and bread [to be spent

(Perfectly good, though not very euphonious)

(*b*) Gifford, H (1580).

If I | should write rash|ly what comes | in my train
It might | be such mat|ter as likes | you not best,
And ra|ther I would | great sor|row sustain
Than not | to fulfil | your law|ful request

(*c*) *Mary Ambree* (*c* 1584)

[When] cap|tains coura|geous whom death | could [not] daunt
[Did march | to the siege of] the ci|ty of Gaunt,

---

[1] For scanned examples of Shakespeare s complete prosodic grasp in
lyric, *v inf* pp 182-3

> They mus|tered their sol|diers by two | and by three,
> And the fore|most in bat|tle was Ma|ry Ambree

(Percy patched the bracketed words (his copy being evidently corrupt) in lines 1 and 2   But 3 and 4 are exactly as in the folio , and their anapæstic base is quite clear At the same time, it is worth remarking that these early lines are apt, frequently though not regularly, to buttress their start on a dissyllabic foot)

XXV. The Enjambed Heroic Couplet (1580-1660)

(*a*) Spenser
The very opening of *Mother Hubberd's Tale* (1591), quoted above (p 62) in its stopped aspect, shows the way to enjambment

> It was | the month | in which | the right|eous Maid,
> That for | disdain | of sin|ful world's | upbraid,
> Fled back | to heaven

And we have, further, an instance as shocking to "regular" prosodists as anything in the seventeenth century

> Whilome, | said she, | before | the world | was civil,
> The Fox | and th' Ape, | *dislik|ing of* | *their evil*
> *And hard* | *estate*

(*b*) Marlowe—as remarkable in *Hero and Leander* for this as for "single-moulding" in blank verse

>   Where the ground
> Was strewed with pearl, and in low coral groves
> Sweet-singing mermaids sported with their loves
> On heaps of heavy gold

(*c*) Drayton began with fairly separated couplets , but indulged in overrunning later, as in *David and Goliath*

> Grim vis|age war | more stern|ly doth | awake
>   ◡ ◡ ◡
> Than it | was wont | and *fur|iously* | *doth shake*
> *Her light|ning sword*

(*d*) Browne

> ⌐ It chanced one morn, clad in a robe of grey,
>   And blushing oft, as rising to betray,

> Enticed this lovely maiden from her bed
> (So when the roses have discoverèd
> Their taintless beauties, flies the early bed
> About the winding alleys merrily)
> Into the wood, and 'twas her usual sport,
> Sitting where most harmonious birds resort,
> To imitate their warbling in April,
> Wrought by the hand of Pan, which she did fill
> Half full of water

(The actual verse-sentence does not end for another half-dozen lines , but the scansion is so perfectly regular that it seems unnecessary to mark it "April" is quite Spenserian, and has both Latin and French justification)

(*e*) The later seventeenth-century enjambers

Chalkhil The rebels, as you heard, being driven hence,
> Despairing e'er to expiate their offence
> By a too late submission, fled to sea
> In such poor barks as they could get, where they
> Roamed up and down, which way the winds did please,
> Without a chart or compass the rough seas
> Enraged with such a load of wickedness,
> Grew big with billows, great was their distress ,
> Yet was their courage greater , desperate men
> Grow valianter with suffering in their ken
> Was a small island, thitherward they steer
> Their weather beaten barks, each plies his gear ,
> Some row, some pump, some trim the ragged sails,
> All were employed and industry prevails
>   (*Thealma and Clearchus*, 2203 2216)

Marmion When you are landed, and a little past
> The Stygian ferry, you your eyes shall cast
> And spy some busy at their wheel, and these
> Are three old women, called the Destinies
>   (*Cupid and Psyche*, iii 259 262)

Chamber- But ere the weak Euriolus (for he
layne This hapless stranger was) again could be
> By strength supported, base Amarus, who
> Could think no more than priceless thanks was due
> For all his dangerous pains, more beastly rude
> Than untamed Indians, basely did exclude
> That noble guest which being with sorrow seen •
> By Ammida, whose prayers and tears had been

> His helpless advocates, she gives in charge
> To her Ismander—till that time enlarge
> Her than restrained desires, he entertain
> Her desolate and wandering friend   Nor vain
> Were these commands, his entertainment being
> Such as observant love thought best agreeing
> To her desires
>
>   (*Pharonnida*, IV iii 243-256)

(The same remark applies here as to Browne   Some of these poets are indeed great "apostrophators," such things as "t'" for "to," "b'" for "by," and "'s" for "his" being common   But these uglinesses are generally resorted to in order to attain or keep the strict decasyllable   Chalkhill (an actual Elizabethan, if he was anything) is less shy of at least apparent trisyllabics, as in "being driv|en," "ex|piate their |"   The double rhyme of "sea" to "they" and "seas" to "please" is worth noticing, *v sup* Rule 34, p 34)

XXVI   THE STOPPED HEROIC COUPLET (1580-1660)

(*a*) Spenser (*Mother Hubberd's Tale*), *v sup* p 62

(*b*) Drayton (*Heroical Epistles*, " Suffolk to Margaret ")

> We all do breathe upon this earthly ball,
> Likewise one Heav'n encompasseth us all ;
> No banishment can be to us assigned
> Who doth retain a true resolved mind ,
> Man in himself a little world doth bear,
> His soul the monarch ever ruling there ,
> Wherever then his body doth remain
> He is a king that in himself doth reign

(Here all the characteristics of the eighteenth-century couplet may be found—the central cæsura or split, the balance of the two halves, the completion of sense in the couplet and almost in the line)

(*c*) Fairfax (end couplets)

> If fictions light I mix with Truth Divine
> And fill these lines with other praise than Thine   (1 2)

We further seek what their offences be
Guiltless I quit , guilty I set them free   (ii   5)

Thro' love the hazard of fierce war to prove,
Famous for arms, but famous more for love   (iii   40)

In fashions wayward, and in love unkind,
For Cupid deigns not wound a currish mind   (iv   46)

(Observe here the tendency, not merely to balance, but to positive antithesis, in the halves)

(*d*) Beaumont, Sir John

> The relish of the Muse consists in rhyme
> One verse must meet another like a chime
> Our Saxon shortness hath peculiar grace
> In choice of words fit for the ending-place,
> Which leave impression in the mind as well
> As closing sounds of some delightful bell

(*e*) Sandys
Compare the openings of *Job* I and II

> In Ilus, a land which near the sun s uprise
> And northern confines of Sabæa lies,
> A great example of perfection reigned,
> His name was Job, his soul with guilt unstained

> Again when all the radiant sons of light
> Before His throne appeared, Whose only sight
> Beatitude infused , the Inveterate Foe,
> In fogs ascending from the depth below,
> Profaned their blest assembly

(*f*) Waller

> With the sweet sound of this harmonious lay
> About the keel delighted dolphins play ,
> Too sure a sign of sea's ensuing rage
> Which must anon this royal troop engage ,
> To whom soft sleep seems more secure and sweet
> Within the town commanded by our fleet

(*g*) Cowley (*Davideis*)

> Lo ' with pure hands thy heavenly fire to take,
> My well chang'd muse I a pure vestal make
> From Earth's vain joys and Love's soft witchcraft free,
> I consecrate my Magdalene to thee

> Lo, this great work, a temple to thy praise
> On polish'd pillars of strong verse I raise—
> A tert́ple where if thou vouchsafe to dwell
> It Solomon's and Herod's shall excel

(It should be observed on these that in Beaumont, Sandys I , Waller, and Cowley the separation of the couplets is strictly maintained , in Sandys II not   In fact, this passage, but for the rhymes, has almost the run of Miltonic blank verse   Waller once approaches an initial trochee or "inversion of accent" in "With the"   Here Cowley is pretty regular.   But not far off may be found such a line as—

> Themselves at first against themselves *they excite* ,

where he must either have intended " they-ex-" to be elided or have meant an anapæstic ending of the kind so common in the dramatists his contemporaries   And he constantly uses (explicitly defending it) the Alexandrine, as in—

> Like some | fair pine | o'erlook|ing all | th' igno|bler wood,

or—

> Which runs, | and, as | it runs, | for ev|er shall | run on ;

while he often employs trochees or spondees   He does not use the triplet in the *Davideis*, but does elsewhere, and, after Virgil, he sometimes indulges in half-lines)

XXVII VARIOUS FORMS OF OCTOSYLLABLE-HEPTA-SYLLABLE (LATE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

(*a*) Shakespeare (doubtfully ?)

> (1) King Pan|dion | he is | dead,
> All thy | friends are | lapped in | lead
> (2) Let | the bird | of loud|est lay
> On | the sole | Ara|bian tree

(These distichs from the *Passionate Pilgrim* will illustrate the two different forms which the heptasyllable—really an octosyllable acephalous or catalectic—can take.   The catalectic form (1) becomes trochaic , the acephalous (2),

iambic.   They can be interchanged, and either can group with the full iambic dimeter , but, *individually*, it would spoil (1) to scan it as iambic, (2) to scan it as trochaic   Yet on "accentual" scansion there is no difference , and some advocates of recent fancy "stress"-systems maintain that the rhythms are identical !)

(*b*) Shakespeare (almost certainly)

> The cat | with eyne | of burn|ing coal
> Now couch|es 'fore | the mou|ses hole,
> And crick|ets sing | at the ov|en's mouth
> As | the blith|er from | their drouth

(In this famous and eminently Shakespearian passage from *Pericles*, the last line, a heptasyllable, goes perfectly with the rest, or octosyllables, either as acephalous or as catalectic, either as an iambic fellow or a trochaic substitute)

(*c*) Shakespeare (certainly)

> And we fairies, that do run
>   By the triple Hecate's team,
> From the presence of the sun
>   Follow ing | dark ness | like a dream,
> Now are frolic   not a mouse
> Shall disturb this hallowed house
> I am sent with broom before,
> To sweep the dust behind the door

(From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*   Same as last, except that the full octosyllable is only reached at the end, and perhaps in line 4   " Hecat[e]," as often, is dissyllabic)

(*d*) Browne, W

> Be ev|er fresh ' | Let no | man dare
> To spoil | thy fish, | make lock | or wear,
> But on | thy mar|gent still | let dwell,
> Those flowers | which have | the sweet|est smell,
> And let | the dust | upon | thy strand
> Become, | like Ta|gus, gold|en sand
> Let as | much good | betide | to thee
> As thou | hast fa|vour showed | to me.

(Pure octosyllables   There is a catalectic line now and then elsewhere, but it is an evident exception)

(*e*) Wither

> For | in her | a grace | there shines,
> That o'er-daring thoughts confines,
> Making worthless men despair
> To be loved of one so fair
> Yea, the Destinies agree,
> Some good judgments blind should be,
> And not gain the power of knowing
> Those rare beauties in her growing

(Pure heptasyllables, taking either cadence, and, when extended, owing the extension mainly, if not wholly, to the double rhyme   The first line gives the alternative scansion , but Wither's run is, on the whole, trochaic, as Browne's is iambic.)

XXVIII "COMMON," "LONG," AND "IN MEMORIAM " MEASURE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

(*a*) See above, § XXIII-, for " Drink to me only "

(*b*) Donne (?), Ayton (?), Anon (?), (C M)

> Thou sent'st | me late | a heart | was crowned,
>   I took | it to | be thine ,
> But when | I saw | it had | a wound,
>   I knew | that heart | was mine
>
> A boun|ty of | a strange | conceit ¹
>   To send | mine own | to me,
> And send | it in | a worse | estate
>   Than when | it came | to thee

(A capital example of the possibility of rhetorical *addition* to the strict foot-system, as in line 2, "I took it ‖ to be thine "[1] For "concayt" and "estate" *cf. sup* § XXV *sub fin*)

(*c*) Herrick (C M.)

> Bid me | to live | and I | will live
>   Thy Pro|testant | to be ,
> Or bid | me love, | and I | will give
>   A lov|ing heart to | thee

(Strongly flavoured, and greatly improved, by trochaic substitution in first foot)

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¹ See Glossary, '' Musical and Rhetorical Arrangements "

(*d*) Marvell (L M)

> My love | is of | a birth | as rare ⸙
> As 'tis | for ob|ject, strange | and high—
> It was | begot|ten of | Despair
> Upon | Impos|sibil|ity

(*e*) Lord Herbert of Cherbury (*In Memoriam* metre).

> For whose | affec|tion once | is shown,
> No long|er can | the world | beguile ,
> Who sees | his pen|ance all | the while
> He holds | a torch | to make | her known

(Great regularity of feet , but already the "circular" motion which Tennyson was to perfect)

XXIX IMPROVED ANAPÆSTIC MEASURES
(DRYDEN, ANON , PRIOR)

(*a*) Dryden (1691 ?)

> While Pan | and fair Sy|rinx are fled | from our shore,
> The Gra|ces are ban|ished, and Love | is no more
> The soft | god of plea|sure that warmed | our desires
> Has brok|en his bow, | and extin|guished his fires,
> And vows | that himself | and his moth|er will mourn,
> Till Pan | and fair Sy|rinx in tri|umph return

(These early anapæsts, as noted, are very apt to begin with dissyllabic feet   But it was no rule   in this same piece, "The Beautiful Lady of the May," occurs the line

> *All the nymphs* | were in white | and the shep|herd in green

(*b*) Anon in *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1719, but contents often much older).

> Let us drink | and be mer|ry, sing, dance, | and rejoice,
> With cla|ret and sher|ry, theor|bo and voice
> The change|able world | to our joys | is unjust,
> All trea|sure's uncer|tain, then down | with your dust !
> On fro|lics dispose | your pounds, shil|lings, and pence,
> For we | shall be no|thing a hun|dred years hence

(*c*) Prior (1696)

> While with la|bour assid|uous due plea|sure I mix,
> And in one | day alone | for the bus|iness of six,
> In a lit|tle Dutch chaise | on a Sat|urday night, ⸙
> On my left | hand my Hor|ace, a nymph | on my right

(Observe here in "assid[u]ous" and "bus[i]ness" the liberty of combining adjacent vowels (-*uo*us) and following familiar pronunciation (*biz*ness) which this light verse especially authorises

XXX "PINDARICS" (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

Dryden (complete stanza from "Anne Killigrew" ode)

  — ‿   VI

Born to | the spa|cious em|pire of | the Nine,
One would | have thought | she should | have been | content
To man|age well | that migh|ty gov|ernment ,
But what | can young | ambi|tious souls | confine ?
  To the | next realm | she stretched | her sway,
  For Pain|ture near | adjoin|ing lay,
A plen|teous prov|ince, and | allur|ing prey
  A cham|ber of | depen|dencies | was framed,
(As con|querors | will nev|er want | pretence,
When armed, | to just|ify | the offence,)
And the | whole fief, | in right | of po|etry, | she claimed
The coun|try op|en lay | without | defence ,
For po|ets fre|quent in|roads there | had made,
  And per|fectly | could rep|resent
  The shape, | the face, | with ev|ery lin|eament,
And all | the large | domains | which the | Dumb Sis|ter swayed ,
  All bowed | beneath | her gov|ernment,
  Received | in tri|umph where|soe'er | she went
Her pen|cil drew | whate'er | her soul | designed,
And oft | the hap|py draught | surpassed | the im|age in | her mind
  The syl|van scenes | of herds | and flocks,
  And fruit|ful plains | and bar|ren rocks,
  Of shal|low brooks | that flowed | so clear,
  The bot|tom did | the top | appear ,
  Of deep|er too | and am|pler floods,
  Which, as | in mir|rors, showed | the woods ,
  Of lof|ty trees, | with sa|cred shades,
  And per|spectives | of plea|sant glades,
  Where nymphs | of bright|est form | appear,
  And shag|gy sat|yrs stand|ing near,
  Which them | at once | admire | and fear
  The ru|ins, too, | of some | majes|tic piece,
  Boasting | the power | of an|cient Rome | or Greece,
  Whose sta|tues, frie|zes, col|umns, bro|ken lie,
  And, though | defaced, | the won|der of | the eye ;

What na|ture, art, | bold fic|tion, e'er | durst frame,
Her form|ing hand | gave fea|ture to | the name
So strange | a con|course ne'er | was seen | before,
But when | the peo|pled ark | the whole | crea|tion bore

(88-91, heroics, 92, 93, octosyllables, 94-96, heroics, 97, octosyllable, 98, Alexandrine, 99, 100, heroic, 101, octosyllable, 102, heroic, 103, Alexandrine, 104, octosyllable, 105, 106, heroics, 107, fourteener, 108-118, continuous octosyllables, 119-125, continuous heroics capped and finished off by 126, Alexandrine. In 97, probably " th' offence ")

XXXI THE HEROIC COUPLET FROM DRYDEN TO CRABBE

(*a*) Dryden (early non-dramatic).

> Our setting sun, from his declining seat,
> Shot beams of kindness on *you*, not of heat ;
> And, when his love was bounded in a few
> That were unhappy, that they might be true,
> Made *you* the favourite of his last sad times,
> That is, a sufferer in his subjects' crimes
> Thus, those first favours *you* received, were sent,
> Like heaven's rewards, in earthly punishment
> Yet fortune, conscious of *your* destiny,
> E'en then took care to lay *you* softly by,
> And wrapped *your* fate among her precious things,
> Kept fresh to be unfolded with *your* king's

(Note recurrent *you* and *your* employed like pauses to vary verse Otherwise strictly " regular ")

(*b*) Dryden (" heroic "-dramatic type at best)

> Fair though you are
> As summer mornings, | and your eyes more bright
> Than stars that twinkle | in a winter's night ,
> Though you have eloquence to warm and move
> Cold age and praying hermits into love ;
> Though Almahide with scorn rewards my care,—
> Yet, | than to change, | 'tis nobler to despair
> My love's my soul , | and that from fate is free ,
> 'Tis that unchanged and deathless part of me
> (*Conquest of Granada* II , III iii.)

(Observe how the alternation of central pause, strongly (|) and weakly $)$ or hardly at all (no mark) emphasised, knits and shades the verse, and how, in the first line, there is positive enjambment   Yet there is still no trisyllabic substitution   This type is continued and perfected in the great satires and didactic pieces for argument and attack, and in the *Fables* for narrative   It admits, to relieve monotony, the Alexandrine (*Hind and Panther*, 1 23, 24))—

> Their corps[e] to perish, but their kind to last,
> So much | the death | less plant | the dy | ing fruit | surpassed ,

the triplet (*ibid* a little further)—

> Can I believe eternal God could lie
> Disguised in mortal mould and infancy,
> That the great Maker of the world could die ?

both combined (*Palamon and Arcite*, 11 560-562)—

> There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
> And treason labouring in the traitor's thought,
> And mid | wife time | the ri | pened plot | to mur | der brought ,

and sometimes the fourteener (*Medal*, 94)—

> Thou leapst o'er all eternal truths in thy Pindaric way

(*c*) Passages from Garth, (1), and Pope, (2) and (3), to illustrate the mechanical character of the eighteenth-century couplet, the ease with which it can be shifted from decasyllabic to octosyllabic, and its peculiar construction of ridge-backed antithetic pause

> (1) With ~~breathing~~ fire his pitchy nostrils blow,
> As from his sides he shakes the ~~fleecy~~ snow
> Around this ~~hoary~~ prince from wat'ry beds
> His subject islands raise their ~~verdant~~ heads
>
> Eternal spring with ~~smiling~~ verdure here
> Warms the mild air and crowns the ~~youthful~~ year
>
> . .
>
> The vine undressed her ~~swelling~~ clusters bears,
> The labouring hind the ~~mellow~~ olive cheers.
>
> (*The Dispensary*)

(Read, omitting the interlined epithets, and you get perfectly fluent octosyllables)

(2) First in these fields, I try the *sylvan* strains,
Nor blush to sport on Windsor's *blissful* plains
Fair Thames, flow gently from thy *sacred* spring,
While on thy banks *Sicilian* Muses sing ,
Let *vernal* airs thro' *trembling* osiers play
And Albion's cliffs resound the *rural* lay

(*Windsor Forest*)

Now this, in the same way, by the omission of some of the italicised *gradus* epithets, becomes—

First in these fields I try the strains,
Nor blush to sport on Windsor's plains
Fair Thames, flow gently from thy spring,
While on thy banks [the] Muses sing ,
Let vernal airs through osiers play
And Albion's cliffs resound the lay

(3) Not with more glories
The sun first rises
Than issuing forth
Launch'd on the bosom of
Fair nymphs and well-drest youths
But ev'ry eye was fix'd
On her *white* breast
Which *Jews* might kiss
Her *lively* looks
Quick as her eyes
Favours to none
Oft she rejects
Bright as the sun
And like the sun
Yet graceful ease
Might hide her faults
If to her share
Look in her face

in th' *ethereal* plain
o'er the *purpled* main,
the rival of his beams
the *silver* Thames
around her shone,
on her alone
a *sparkling* cross she wore,
and *Infidels* adore
a *sprightly* mind disclose,
and as unfixed as those
to all she *smiles* extends,
but never *once* offends
her eyes the gazers strike,
they shine on all alike,
and sweetness void of pride
if *Belles* had faults to hide
some female errors fall,
and you'll forget them all

(*The Rape of the Lock*)

Of course Pope,[1] in the close of the *Dunciad* and elsewhere, has passages of the utmost dignity , and the antithetic arrangement is good for satire   But perhaps

[1] For more on the differences of his couplet and Dryden's, see next Book.

the finest passages of this class of couplet—certainly the finest *with* the *Dunciad* close—are the following, from

(*d*) Johnson (*Vanity of Human Wishes*—end)

> Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find ?
> Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind ?
> Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
> Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate ?
> Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
> No cries invoke the mercies of the skies ?
>
>   .   .   .
>
> Yet, when the sense of sacred presence fires
> And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
> Pour forth thy favours for a healthful mind,
> Obedient passions, and a will resigned ,
> For love which scarce collective man can fill ,
> For patience sovereign o'er transmuted ill ,
> For faith that, panting for a happier seat,
> Counts death kind nature's signal of retreat
> These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
> These goods He grants who grants the power to gain ;
> With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
> And makes the happiness she does not find

and

(*e*) Crabbe ("Delay brings Danger"—end)

> Early he rose, and looked with many a sigh
> On the red light that filled the eastern sky ,
> Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,
> To hail the glories of the new-born day
> But now dejected, languid, listless, low,
> He saw the wind upon the water blow,
> And the cold stream curled onward as the gale
> From the pine hill blew harshly down the dale ,
> On the right side the youth a wood surveyed,
> With all its dark intensity of shade ,
> Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,
> In this, the pause of nature and of love,
> When now the young are reared, and when the old,
> Lost to the tie, grow negligent and cold—
> Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
> Half hid in mist that hung upon the fen ;
> Before him swallows gathering for the sea,
> Took their short flights and twittered on the lea ;
> And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
> And slowly blackened in the sickly sun ,

> All these were sad in nature, or they took
> Sadness from him, the likeness of his look
> And of his mind—he pondered for a while,
> Then met his Fanny with a borrowed smile

(Observe, besides the other points mentioned, that trisyllabic feet practically never occur in Garth, Pope, and Johnson—"wat'ry for watery," and words like "ether(ea)l," "celest(ia)l," "happ(ie)r," being *intended* to take the benefit of elision, though, as a matter of fact, they *give* that of extension   Only Crabbe, in "gathering," may perhaps not have meant "gath'ring")

XXXII   EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BLANK VERSE

(*a*) Thomson

> First the flaming red
> Sprung vivid forth ; the tawny orange next ,
> And next delicious yellow , by whose side
> Fell the kind beams of all refreshing green
> Then the pure blue that swells autumnal skies,
> Etherial played, and then of sadder hue
> Emerged the deepened indigo (as when
> The heavy-skirted evening droops with frost),
> While the last gleamings of refracted light
> Died in the fainting violet away

(This, from the poem on Newton, is Thomson at his very best in blank verse, or nearly so   He was, however, too apt to emphasise his phrases into full stops, producing what Johnson justly called "broken style," as thus

> On he walks
> Graceful, and crows defiance   In the pond
> The finely-chequered duck, before her train,
> Rows garrulous   The stately sailing swan, etc)

The trick was pushed to a pitch of absurdity by

(*b*) Glover

> Mindful of their charge,
> The chiefs depart   Leonidas provides
> His various armour   Agis close attends,
> His best assistant   First a breastplate arms,
> The spacious chest ;

and is somewhat noteworthy in Young and others. The reason probably was a sort of nervous fear lest, in the absence of rhyme, the versification should not be sufficiently marked   But at length the proper flow was recovered by

(*c*) Cowper

$$- \quad - \qquad\qquad - \ \cup$$

Time made | thee what | thou wast, | king of | the woods,
And time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in   Once thy spreading boughs

$$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \cup\ \cup \quad -$$

O'erhung the champaign , and the nu|merous flocks
That grazed it stood beneath that ample cope
Uncrowded, yet safe-sheltered from the storm
No flock frequents thee now   Thou hast outlived
Thy popularity, and art become
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth

                                                       (*Yardley Oak*)

$$\quad - \qquad - \qquad\qquad\qquad - \ \cup$$

(The spondee " Time made " and trochee " king of " are certainly intentional, whether consciously as such or not.

$$\qquad\qquad \cup \ \cup \quad -$$

The anapæst " -merous flocks " may not have been *meant*, for Cowper had not cleared his mind up about "elision," but is one in fact)

XXXIII   The Regularised Pindaric Ode

Analysis of Gray's *Bard* (the second and third divisions coincide to the minutest degree)

I 1

1   " Ruin seize thee, ruthless King !
2   Confusion on thy banners wait ,
3   Tho' fanned by Conquest's crimson wing
4   They mock the air with idle state
5   Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,
6   Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
7   To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
8   From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears ! "
9   —Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride
10   Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay,

11   As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
12   He wound with toilsome march his long array —
13   Stout Glo'ster stood aghast in speechless trance,
14   "To arms !" cried Mortimer, and couch'd his quivering lance.

I   i (*Strophe*)

1   Troch dim cat $- \cup - \cup - \cup -$
2   Iamb dim acat $\cup - \cup - \cup - \cup -$
3   ,,   ,,   ,,
4   ,,   ,,   ,,
5   as 1
6 and 7   Heroics nearly pure, $\cup - \cup - \cup - \cup - \cup -$
8   as 2 to 4
9 to 13   Heroics
14   Alexandrine $\cup - \cup - \ \cup - \cup - \cup - \cup -$ " Quiv'ring," probably

I   ii

1   On a rock, whose haughty brow
2   Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
3   Robed in the sable garb of woe
4   With haggard eyes the Poet stood
5   (Loose his beard and hoary hair
6   Stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air),
7   And with a master's hand and prophet's fire
8   Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre
9   " Hark, how each giant oak and desert cave
10   Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath !
11   O'er thee, oh King ! their hundred arms they wave,
12   Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe ,
13   Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
14   To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay

I   ii (*Antistrophe*)
Identical

I   iii

1   "Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
2   That hush'd the stormy main
3   Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed
4   Mountains, ye mourn in vain
5   Modred, whose magic song
6   Made hugh Plinlimmon bow his cloud topt head.
7   On dreary Arvon's shore they lie
8   Smear'd with gore and ghastly pale
9   Far, far aloof the affrighted ravens sail ,
10   The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by

11   Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
12   Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
13   Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
14   Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
15   No more I weep , They do not sleep ,
16   On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
17   I see them sit , They linger yet,
18   Avengers of their native land
19   With me in dreadful harmony they join,
20   And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line

I iii (*Epode*)

1   Iamb dim brachycat ᴗ − ᴗ − ᴗ −
2   ,,   ,,   ,,
3   Heroic
4, 5, as 1, 2, with trochee substituted in first place
6 as 3
7   Iamb dim acat
8   Troch dim cat
9 to 14 Heroics   the last 4 in quatrain
15 to 18 Iamb dims arranged in stanza quatrain , internal rhymes
        only in lines 15 and 17
19   Heroic
20   Alexandrine

Rhyme scheme of Strophe and Antistrophe	Rhyme scheme of Epode
a	*a*
b	*b*
a	*c*
b	*b*
c	*a*
c	*c*
d	*d*
d	*e*
e	*e*
f	*d*
e	*f*
f	*g*
g	*f*
g	*g*
	o [1]
	h
	o [1]
	h
	i
	i

[1] Unrhymed termination as far as end-syllable goes

XXXIV   LIGHTER EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LYRIC

(*a*) Gay

> The school|boy's desire | is a play-|day,
> The school|master's joy | is to flog,
> The milk|maid's delight | is on May |day,
> But mine | is on sweet | Molly Mog

(Remarkable for the improvement, by the redundant syllable in the odd lines, on the plain anapæstic three-foot quatrain used later by Shenstone and Cowper, as well as for its leading up to the more obvious successes of Praed and Mr Swinburne, *v inf* § XLIV)

(*b*) Gray

> 'Twas on a lofty vase's side
> Where China's gayest art had dyed
>   The azure flowers that blow—
> Demurest of the tabby kind,
> The pensive Selima reclined,
>   Gazed on the lake below

(Eleventh - century poets employed the old romance-six, or *rime couée*, almost more largely than any other metre for general lyrical purposes)

(*c*) (D Lewis ?)

> And when with envy Time, transport|ed,
>   Shall think to rob us of our joys,
> You'll in your girls again be court|ed,
>   And I'll go wooing in my boys.

(Another instance of the refreshing and alterative effect of redundance—in this case on the old "long measure" But even in its stricter form the century managed "L M" better than "C M," which, till Blake, was almost always sing-song)

XXXV   THE REVIVAL OF EQUIVALENCE
(CHATTERTON AND BLAKE)

Percy's *Reliques*, however, taught it something better, though Percy's own imitations and those of others were often as described above   Yet soon we find in

(*a*) Chatterton, such adaptations of ballad metre as—

> I ken | Syr Ro|ger from | afar
> Trippynge | over | the lea,
> Ich ask | whie | the lov|erd's son
> Is moe | than mee?

and such equivalenced octosyllabic couplet and stanza as—

> ∪ − ∪∪ −   ∪ − ∪∪ −
> Sir Bol|telier then | having con|quer'd his twayne,
> ⊽ −   ∪∪ − ∪ − ∪∪ −
> Rode con|queror off | the tour|neying playne,
> ∪ − ∪ ∪ − ∪ ∪ − ∪∪ −
> Receiv|ing a gar|land from Al|ice's hand,
> ⊽ −   ∪ − ∪ ∪ − ∪ −
> The fair|est la|dye in | the lande

But the real Columbus here was

(*b*) Blake, who from 1780 onwards wrote such things as—

> ∪   −   ⌣   −
> The wild | winds weep
> ∪   ∪   −   ∪∪ −
> And the night | is a-cold ,
> ∪ − ∪ −
> Come hi|ther, Sleep,
> ⌣ ⌣   −   ⌣⌣ −
> And my griefs | unfold
> ∪ −   ∪ − ∪ −
> But lo ' | the morn|ing peeps
> − ∪   ∪ − ⊽   −
> Over | the east|ern steeps,
> ∪   ∪ − ∪ −   ∪ −
> And the rust|ling beds | of dawn
> ∪ −   ∪ −
> The earth | do scorn

> −   ∪ ∪   −
> Lo ' | to the vault
> ∪ − ·∪   −
> Of pa|ved heaven,
> ∪   − ∪   −
> With sor|row fraught,
> ∪ −   ⊽ −
> My notes | are driven
> ∪   −   ∪ − ∪ −
> They strike | the ear | of night,
> −   − ∪ − ∪ −
> Make weep | the eyes | of day

<pre>
  ∪   ∪   ∪   −
They make mad | the roar|ing wings,
     ∪   ∪   −   ∪   −
And with tem | pests play

  ∪   ∪   −   ∪   −
Like a fiend | in a cloud,
       ∪   −   ∪   −
  With howl|ing woe
 ∪ ∪   −   ∪ ∪   −
After night | I do crowd
      ∪   ∪   −   ∪   −
  And with night | will go ,
 ∪   −   ∪   −   ∪ ∪   −
I turn | my back | to the East,
     ∪   ∪   −   ∪   −   ∪   −
From whence com|forts have | increased,
     ∪   −   ∪   −   ∪   −
For light | doth seize | my brain
       ∪   −   ∪   −
  With fran|tic pain
</pre>

(This cannot be studied too carefully, and is almost a typical example of sound prosody, orderly without monotony and free without licence   Every substitution is justified, both on the general principles expounded throughout this book, and to the ear in each individual case)

XXXVI   RHYMELESS ATTEMPTS (COLLINS TO SHELLEY)

(*a*) Collins (*Ode to Evening*)

If aught | of oat|en stop | or pas|toral song
May hope, | O pen|sive Eve, | to soothe | thine ear
  Like thy | own sol|emn springs,
  Thy springs | and dy|ing gales

(Perfectly regular heroics and sixes , "pastoral" most probably intended to be "past'ral ")

(*b*) Sayers (Choruses of *Moina*)

I

Hail to | her whom | Frea | loves,
  Moina | hail '
When first | thine in|fant eyes | beheld   •
  The beam | of day,

Idea | from Val|halla's | groves
Mark'd thy | birth in | silent | joy,
Frea, | sweetly | smiling | saw
The swift-|wing'd mes|senger | of love
Bearing | in her [rosy | hand
The gold-|tipt horn | of gods

(This—which is fairly but not wholly free from the fault noted in II —is ordinary iambic and trochaic mixture)

<div align="center">II.</div>

Dark, dark | is Moi|na's bed,
On earth's | hard lap | she lies
[Where is | the beau|teous form
    That he roes loved ?]
[Where is | the beam|ing eye,
    The rud|dy cheek ?]
Cold, cold | is Moi|na's bed,
And shall | no lay | of death
[With pleas|ing mur|mur soothe
    Her part|ed soul ?]
[Shall no | tear wet | the grave
    Where Moi|na lies ?]
The bards | shall raise | the lay | of death,
The bards | shall soothe | her part|ed soul,
[And drop [the tear [of grief
    On Moi|na's grave]

(It will be observed that each of the couplets enclosed in square brackets is simply a blank-verse line, arbitrarily split   This is probably the result of the effort at rhymeless *stanza*   Observe the unbroken iambic rhythm—another danger)

(*c*) Southey (*Thalaba*)

How beau|tiful | is Night ⁹
A dew|y fresh|ness fills | the si|lent air,
No mist | obscures, | nor cloud | nor speck | nor stain
     — ◡
  Breaks the | serene | of heaven
In full-|orbed glo|ry yon|der moon | divine
     —   —
  Rolls through | the dark | blue depths
    Beneath | her stead|y ray
    The des|ert cir|cle spreads,

<pre>
 ‾   ‿   ‾   ‾
Like the | round o|cean, gir|dled with | the sky
     How beau|tiful | is Night '
</pre>

(Iambic lines of various lengths with trochaic and spondaic but no other substitution (there are anapæsts elsewhere)   The couplet - six, or split Alexandrine, is intentional, but Southey expressly avoids split heroics)

(*d*) Shelley (*Queen Mab*)

> How wonderful is Death,
> Death and his brother Sleep '
> One, pale as yonder waning moon
>   With lips of lurid blue ,
> The other, rosy as the morn
>   When throned on ocean's wave
>   It blushes o'er the world
> Yet both so passing wonderful '

XXXVII The Revived Ballad (Percy to Coleridge)

(*a*) Percy's imitation of equivalence and extension of scheme (*Sir Cawline*)

> Then she | held forth | her lil|y white hand
> Towards | that knight | so free ,
> He gave | to it | one gen|til kiss,
> His heart | was brought | from bale | to bliss,
> The tears | sterte from | his ee

(Not bad ; might have been improved by "*And* the tears|.")

(*b*) Goldsmith (regularised sing-song)

> Turn An|geli|na, ev|er dear,
>   My charm|er, turn | to see
> Thy own, | thy long-|lost Ed|win here
>   Restored | to love | and thee '

(*c*) Southey (quite sound in principle, and not bad in effect , but a little more poetic powder wanted)

> They laid | her where | these four | roads meet
> Here in | this ver|y place—
> The earth | upon | her corpse | was pressed
> This post | was driv|en into | her breast,
>   And a stone | is on | her face

(*d*) Coleridge (the real thing in simpler and more complex form).

> It is | an an|cient ma|riner,
>   And he stop|peth one | of three—
> " By thy long | grey beard | and glit|tering eye,
>   Now where|fore stop'st | thou me ? "
>
> .   .
>
> Her lips | were red, | her looks | were free,
> Her locks | were yel|low as gold ;
> Her skin | was as white | as lep|rosy—
> The night|mare Life-|in-Death | was she,
> Who thicks | man's blood | with cold.
>
> We list|ened and | looked side|ways up !
> Fear at | my heart, | as at | a cup,
> My life-|blood seemed | to sip !
> The stars | were dim | and thick | the night,
> The steers|man's face | by his lamp | gleamed white ,
> From the sails | the dew | did drip—
> Till clomb | above | the east|ern bar
> The horn|èd moon, | with one | bright star
> Within | the neth|er tip

(The presence and absence of anapæstic substitution here, with its effect in each case, should be carefully studied)

XXXVIII

Specimens of *Christabel,* with note on the application of the system to later lyric (Some have said that in *Christabel* "the consideration of feet is dropped altogether," and others, that it "cannot be analysed," or can only be so by the rough process of counting accents Let us go and do it)

> ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ —
> 'Tis the mid|dle of night | by the cas|tle clock,
> ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ —
> And the owls | have awa|kened the crow|ing cock,
>   ◡ — ◡ ◡
>   Tu—-whit—tu whoo !
> ◡ — ◡ — ◡ — ◡ —
> And hark, | again ' | the crow|ing cock,
>   ◡ — ◡ — ◡ —
>   How drow|sily | it crew |

(A five-lined ballad stanza, freely but regularly equiva-
lenced with anapæsts   Line 3 may be for r monosyllabic
feet, or an iambic monometer—two feet,—according to the
value put on the first note of the owl's cry)   The rest of
the piece is *not* in ballad stanza, but in octosyllabic couplet,
again more or less freely but regularly equivalenced, and
allowing itself occasional licences of rhyme-order, line-length,
etc   Thus the succeeding lines are in two batches, where
the substitution—anapæstic, trochaic, spondaic or mono-
syllabic — increases, dwindles, disappears and reappears
ad libitum

> ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> Sir Le|oline, | the Ba|ron rich,
> ‒ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ   ‒
> Hath | a tooth|less mas|tiff, which
> ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> From | her ken|nel beneath | the rock
> ‒ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> Ma|keth an|swer to | the clock,
> ‒   ᵕ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ᵕ
> Four | for the quar|ters and twelve | for the hour ,
> ‒ ᵕ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒
> Ev|er and aye, | by shine | and shower,
> ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> Sixteen | short howls | not o|ver loud ,
> ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> Some say, | she sees | my la|dy's shroud
>
> ‒   ᵕ ~   ‒ ᵕ ᵕ ‒
> Is | the night | chilly | and dark ?
> ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒
> The night | is chil|ly, but | not dark
> ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> The thin | gray cloud | is spread | on high,
> ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> It cov|ers but | not hides | the sky
> ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ᵕ ᵕ ‒
> The moon | is behind, | and at | the full ,
> ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒
> And yet | she looks | both small | and dull
> ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> The night | is chill, | the cloud | is gray
> ᵕ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒
> T'is a month | before | the month | of May,
> ᵕ ᵕ ‒   ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒ ᵕ ‒
> And the spring | comes slow|ly up | this way.

The whole of the rest follows suit, with occasional variations (*not,* save in one case perhaps, "irregularities "), as, for instance—

<center>˘</center>
<center>And ‖ in si|lence pray|eth she</center>

<center>From ‖ the love|ly la|dy's cheek,</center>

where a triple scansion might appear possible (1) mono-syllabic beginnings indicated by ‖, (2) three-foot lines with anapæstic opening (|), and (3) the trochaic variation common in seventeenth-century poets ( )   A famous third line—

<center>— ˘ ˘ ˘ — ˘ —</center>
<center>Beau|tiful | exceed|ingly,|</center>

decides in favour of (1), for (2) and (3) would exceedingly spoil its beauty   There is sometimes almost *complete* anapæstic substitution—

<center>˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ — ˘ ˘ — ˘ ˘ —</center>
<center>Save the boss | of the shield | of Sir Le|oline tall,</center>
<center>˘ — ˘ ˘ — ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ —</center>
<center>Which hung | in a mur|ky old niche | in the wall,</center>

which is still further developed in the spell of Geraldine—

<center>˘ ˘ — ˘ ˘ — ˘ ˘ — ˘ ˘ —</center>
<center>In the touch | of this bo|som there work|eth a spell</center>

(This, in couplet, is a little dangerous)

Note on the Application of the "Christabel" System to
Nineteenth-Century Lyric generally

It is most remarkable, but suggestive to a further extent of the fact that Coleridge did not entirely comprehend what he was doing, that *Christabel,* especially its opening stanza, supplies a complete key to the later nineteenth-century lyrical scansion which (*v sup* p 27) he and others failed to understand in Tennyson   That opening stanza, placed side by side with the "Hollyhock Song " (see above again), will completely interpret it to any one who has eye and ear enough to mutate the *mutanda.*   And when the

connection and the interpretation have once been seized,
there is nothing, from Shelley's apparently impulsive and
instinctive harmonies to the most complicated experiments
of Browning and Swinburne, which will not yield to the
master keys of equivalent substitution and varying of line-
length, subject to the general law of rhythmical uniformity,
or at least symphonised change   It has been said, for
instance, by the latest and most painful French student
of English prosody, M Verrier, that in Shelley's *Cloud*
"traditional metric renounces the attempt" to divide it into
feet   Here is the division, made without its being neces
sary to think twice—hardly to think once—about a single
article of it

> I bring | fresh showers | for the thirst|ing flowers,
>   From the seas | and the streams ,
> I bear | light shade | for the leaves | when laid
>   In their noon|day dreams
> From my wings | are shaken | the dews | that waken
>   The sweet | buds ev|ery one,
> When rocked | to rest | on their mo|ther's breast,
>   As she dan|ces about | the sun
> I wield | the flail | of the lash|ing hail,
>   And whi|ten the green | plains un|der,
> And then | again | I dissolve | it in rain,
>   And laugh | as I pass | in thun|der

(Base anapæstic, and normal length dimeter , but
shortened to three and two feet, thus—424243434343
The two last three-foot lines catalectic dimeter, or, to put
the same thing in another way, the first threes plain, the last
redundanced   Substitution of iamb or spondee for anapæst
perfectly regular, and (to keep the anapæstic base specially
marked against the iambic) not very much indulged in
"Showers" and "flowers" as well as probably "shaken"
and "waken" used in their shortened or practically mono-
syllabic value   Nothing in the least incalculable, eccentric,
or even difficult, on the foot system)

XXXIX Nineteenth-Century Couplet (Leigh Hunt to Mr Swinburne)

(The examples given will be found to be all more or less of the enjambed variety   Not only has the other been much less practised, owing to reaction from the over-fondness of the eighteenth century for it, but that century, including the period of throwing back to Dryden,[1] practically found out all its considerable but limited possibilities)

(*a*) Leigh Hunt (*Story of Rimini*)

> ‿ ‿
> All the | sweet range wood, flowerbed, grassy plot
> Francesca loved, but most of all this spot
> Whenever she walk'd forth, wherever went
> About the grounds, to this at last she bent
>
> ‿ ‿
> Here she had brought a lute | and a | few books.
>
> ‿ ‿
> Here would she lie for hours, | often | with looks
> More sorrowful by far, yet sweeter too ,
> Sometimes with firmer comfort, where she drew
>
> ‿‿ ‿
> From sense of in|jury's self | and truth sustained,
> *Sometimes with rarest indignation gained,*
> From meek, self pitying mixtures of extremes,
>
> ‿ ‿
> Of hope, and soft despair, and child|like dreams,
> And all that promising calm smile we see
> In Nature's face when we look patiently

(Various substitutions marked, as also in the following)

(*b*) Keats (*Endymion*)

> At this, from every side they hurried in,
> Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,
> And doubling over head their little fists
> In backward yawns   But all were soon alive
> For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive
> In nectar'd clouds and curls through water fair,
> So from the arbour roof down swell'd an air
> ‿ ‿
> Odor|ous and | enli|vening , mak|ing all
> To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call

---

[1] See next Book.

> For their sweet queen   when lo ! the wreathed green
> Disparted, and far upward could be seen
> Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,
> Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,
> Spun off a drizzling dew,—which falling chill
> On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still
> Nestle and turn uneasily about

(As in the seventeenth-century patterns, not much equivalence —the paragraph effect, produced by enjambment and varied pause, being chiefly relied on to prevent monotony   Later, in *Lamia*, Keats tried, after study of Dryden, a less fluent pattern, with stop as well as enjambment, Alexandrine, and triplet)

(*c*) Browning (*Sordello*)

> As, shall I say, some Ethiop, past pursuit
> Of all enslavers, dips a shackled foot,
> Burnt to the blood, into the drowsy black
> Enormous watercourse which guides him back
> To his own tribe again, where he is king ,
> And laughs because he guesses, numbering
> The yellower poison-wattles on the pouch
> Of the first lizard wrested from its couch
> Under the slime (whose skin, the while, he strips
> To cure his nostril with, and festered lips,
> And eyeballs bloodshot through the desert-blast),
> That he has reached its boundary, at last
> May breathe ,—thinks o'er enchantments of the South
> Sovereign to plague his enemies, their mouth,
> Eyes, nails, and hair , but, these enchantments tried
> In fancy, puts them soberly aside
> For truth, projects a cool return with friends,
> The likelihood of winning more amends
> Ere long , thinks that, takes comfort silently,
> Then, from the river's brink, his wrongs and he,
> Hugging revenge close to their hearts, are soon
> Off-striding for the Mountains of the Moon

(Practically a long blank-verse paragraph with the addition of rhyme, which sometimes almost escapes notice)

(*d*) M Arnold (*Tristram and Iseult*)

> The young surviving Iseult, one bright day,
> Had wander'd forth   Her children were at play

> In a g̣een cir|cular hol|low in the heath
> Which borders the sea-shore—a country path
> Creeps over it from the till'd fields behind
> The hollow's grassy banks are soft inclined,
> And to one standing on them, far and near
> The lone unbroken view spreads bright and clear
> Over the waste   This cirque of open ground
>
> Is light and green , the heather, which all round
> Creeps thickly, glows not here , but the pale grass
> Is strewn with rocks, and many a shiver'd mass
> Of vein'd white-gleaming quartz, and here and there
> Dotted with holly-trees and juniper

(An admirable following of Keats's model , the rhymes not too much kept out of view, and suggestions of trochaic and spondaic as well as trisyllabic substitution deftly used For some strange reason he never returned to it, but left it for William Morris to develop, completely and most effectively, in *Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise*)

(*e*) Tennyson very seldom tried the couplet, but when he did, as in "The Vision of Sin," he achieved it magnificently

> I had a vision when the night was late
> A youth came riding toward a palace gate
> He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown
> But that his heavy rider kept him down
> And from the palace came a child of sin,
> And took him by the curls and led him in,
> Where sat a company with heated eyes,
> Expecting when a fountain should arise
> A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
> As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
> Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
> Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
> By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes

(Observe how fine this couplet is, and how *personal* We have seen how Keats studied Dryden this is as if Dryden had studied Keats)

(*f*) Mr Swinburne (*Tristram of Lyonesse*)

> Love, that is first and last of all things made,
> The light that has the living world for shade,

The spirit that for tem|poral veil | has on
The souls of all men, wo|ven in un|ison,
One fi|ery rai|ment with all lives inwrought
And lights of sun|ny and star|ry deed and thought

(In this splendid metre the characteristics of stopped
and enjambed couplet are to a great extent combined.
Considerable anapæstic substitution to gain speed)

XL NINETEENTH-CENTURY BLANK VERSE
(WORDSWORTH TO MR SWINBURNE)

(a) Wordsworth ("Yew Trees ")

Beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly shapes
May meet at noontide , Fear and trembling Hope,
  − ∪
Silence | and Foresight, Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow ,—there to celebrate,
As in a na|tural tem|ple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship , or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring | from Glaramara's inmost caves

(The student should notice the difference, slight but
distinctly perceptible, from the Miltonic model)

(b) Shelley (*Alastor*)

Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful   One darkest glen
Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jas|mine,
A soul dissolving odour, to invite
To some more lovely mys|tery   Through | the dell,
Silence and Twilight here, twin sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like va|porous shapes | half seen , beyond, a well,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky, darting between their chasms,

(There are actually seven lines more before the paragraph comes at once to a line-end and a full stop in punctuation Note also the Thomsonian mid-stops, the Wordsworthian atmosphere (cf citation above), the actual or suggested trisyllabics, the actual redundance in "jas|mine," and the suggested one in "chas|m ")

(*c*) Browning—early (*Pauline*)

Sun-treader '—life and light be thine for ever '
Thou art gone from us , years go by, and spring
Gladdens, and the young earth is beautiful,
Yet thy songs come not, other bards arise,
But none like thee   they stand, thy majesties,
Like mighty works which tell some spirit there
Hath sat regardless of neglect and scorn,
Till, its long task completed, it hath risen
And left us, never to return, and all
Rush in to peer and praise when all in vain
The air seems bright with thy past presence yet,
But thou art still for me as thou hast been
When I have stood with thee as on a throne
With all thy dim creations gathered round
Like mountains, and I felt of mould like them,
And with them creatures of my own were mixed,
Like things half-lived, catching and giving life

(Wordsworthian-Shelleyan, but with a greater touch of dramatic soliloquy in it.   Redundance, but no trisyllabics)

(*d*) Browning—later (*Mr Sludge, " The Medium "*)

O|ver the way
Holds Captain Sparks his court | is it bet|ter there ?
Have you not hunting stories, scalping scenes,
And Mex|ican War | exploits to swallow plump
If you'd be free | o' the stove |side, rocking chair
And tri|o of af|fable daugh|ters ?   Doubt succumbs !
                .   .   .   .
Yet screwed him into henceforth gulling you
To the top | o' your bent, |—all out of one half-lie !

(This unhesitating trisyllabic substitution sometimes reaches the very dangerous adjustment of trochee-anapæst, as in—

Guilty| for the whim's | sake '   Guil|ty he some|how thinks
                                        The Ring and the Book)

(*e*) Tennyson—early (*Lover's Tale*)

    — ◡
Gleams of the water-circles as they broke,

    — ◡
Flickered | like doubtful smiles about her lips,

    — ◡
Quivered | a flying glory in her hair,

    — ◡
Leapt like | a passing thought across her eyes
And mine, with one that will not pass till earth
And heaven pass too, dwell on *my* heaven—a face
Most starry fair, but kindled from within
As 'twere with dawn

(Substitution trochaic only, except for "heaven "—always ambiguous in value)

(*f*) Tennyson—standard middle (*Ulysses*)

    There lies the port , the vessel puffs her sail
There gloom the dark broad seas   My mariners,
Souls that have toil d, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ,
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ,
Death closes all   but something ere the end
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks
The long day wanes   the slow moon climbs   the deep
Moans round with many voices   Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world
Push off, and *sitting well in order smite*
The sounding furrows , for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew
Tho' much is taken, much abides , and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven , that which we are, we are ,
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield

(Verse-paragraph còmpletely achieved by variation of

pause and different weighting of line, with, again, little
or no trisyllabic substitution)

Tennyson—later (*The Holy Grail*) ·

" There rose a hill that none but man could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry wa|tercourses—
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it, storm
Round us and death , for ev|ery mo|ment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd   so quick and thick
The lightnings here and there to left and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
Sprang into fi|re . and at | the base we found
On either hand, as far as eye could see,
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,
Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of men,
Not to be crost save that some ancient king
Had built a way, where, link'd with many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great Sea
And Ga|llahad fled | along them bridge by bridge,
And ev|ery bridge | as quickly as he crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I yearn'd
To fol|low , and thrice | above him all the heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such as seem'd
Shoutings of all the sons of God   and first
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,
In silver shining armour starry clear ,
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a lu|minous cloud
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were—I saw not whence it came
And when the heavens o|pen'd and blazed | again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings ?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw | the spiri|tual cit|y and all | her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl—
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints—
Strike from the sea , and from the star there shot
A rose red sparkle to the cit|y, and there

> Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
> Which never eyes on earth again shall see "

(Paragraph still more ambitious and elaborate, with much trisyllabic substitution and some redundance)

XLI The Non-Equivalenced Octosyllable of Keats and Morris

(*a*) Keats (*Eve of St Mark*)

> Upon a Sabbath day it fell ,
> Twice holy was the Sabbath bell,
> That called the folk to evening-prayer ,
> The city streets were clean and fair
> From wholesome drench of April rains ,
> And on the western window panes
> The chilly sunset faintly told
> Of unmatured green valleys cold,
> Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
> Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,
> Of primroses by sheltered rills,
> And daisies on the aguish hills
> Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell
> The silent streets were crowded well
> With staid and pious companies,
> Warm from their fire side orat'ries,
> And moving, with demurest air,
> To even song and vesper prayer
> Each archèd porch, and entry low,
> Was filled with patient folk and slow,
> With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
> While played the organ loud and sweet

(*b*) Morris (*The Ring given to Venus*)

> By then his eyes were opened wide
> Already up the grey hillside
> The backs of two were turned to him
> One, like a young man tall and slim,
> Whose heels with rosy wings were dight ,
> One like a woman clad in white,
> With glittering wings of many a hue,
> Still changing, and whose shape none knew
> In aftertime would Laurence say
> That though the moonshine, cold and grey,
> Flooded the lonely earth that night,

> These creatures in the moon's despite
> Were coloured clear, as though the sun
> Shone through the earth to light each one—
> And terrible was that to see

(Here the effect is entirely achieved by dividing the couplets, with full stops or strong pauses at the end of the first line, and running the sense of the second into the first of the next , by considerable variations of internal pause, and by placing emphatic or brightly coloured words at different spots   Equivalence is practically limited to such things as "glittering," "aguish," " many a," etc., where it is at minimum strength)

XLII   The Continuous Alexandrine (Drayton and Browning)

(a) Drayton (*Polyolbion*)

> Whenas the pliant Muse, with fair and even flight,
> Betwixt her silver wings is wafted to the Wight,—
> That Isle, which jutting out into the sea so far,
> Her offspring traineth up in exercise of war ,
> Those pirates to put back, that oft purloin her trade,
> Or Spaniards or the French attempting to invade
> Of all the southern isles she holds the highest place,
> And evermore hath been the great'st in Britain's grace
> Not one of all her nymphs her sovereign fav'reth thus,
> Embraced in the arms of old Oceanus
> For none of her account so near her bosom stand,
> 'Twixt Penwith's furthest point and Goodwin's queachy sand

(b) Browning (*Fifine at the Fair*)

> O trip and skip, Elvire !   Link arm in arm with me !
> Like husband and like wife,   together let us see
> The tumbling troop arrayed,   the strollers on their stage,
> Drawn up and under arms,   and ready to engage

(Printing of lines disjoined to show the *extra* stress which Browning lays on the middle pause, and which, though not universal, is general throughout the poem   The case is rather the other way with Drayton. He *observes* the pause,

which is indeed the law of the line , but he does not seem to avail himself of it much as a prosodic or rhetorical instrument)

XLIII

The Dying Swan of Tennyson, scanned entirely through to show the application of the system   (It brings out a scheme of *dimeters* wholly iambic at the lowest rate of substitution, wholly anapæstic at the highest, mixed between   A few instances occur of the other usual and regular licences—trochaic and spondaic substitution, monosyllabic feet (*or* catalexis) and one or two of brachycatalexis, three feet instead of four   And it is to be specially noted that the poet uses these, not at random, but so as to swell and raise his rhythm, proportionately and progressively, from the slow motion and scanty syllabising of the opening scene-stanza to the " flood of eddying song " at the close This process is entirely unaccounted for on the bare " four-stress " system)

I.

∪ — ♉ — ∪ — ∪ —
The plain | was grass|y, wild | and bare,

— — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ —
Wide, wild, | and o|pen to | the air,

— — ∪ — ∪ — ∿
Which | had built | up ev|erywhere

∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ —
An un|der-roof | of dole|ful gray.

∪ ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ —
With an in|ner voice | the riv|er ran,

∪ — ∪ — ∪ ∪ — ∪ —
Adown | it float|ed a dy|ing swan, |

∪ — ∪ — ∪ —
And loud|ly did | lament

♉ ♈ ∪ — ∪ — ∪ —
It was | the mid|dle of | the day

— ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ∪ —
Ever | the wea|ry wind | went on,

∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ♈ ∪ —
And took | the reed-|tops as | it went.

II

◡　　◡　　—　　◡　◡　—　◡　　—
Some　blue | peaks　in | the dis|tance rose,

◡　—　　◡　—　　◡　—　　◡　◡
And white | against | the cold |white sky,

◡　—　　◡　　—　◡　—
Shone out | their crown|ing snows

◡　—　◡　—　◡　◡　—　◡
One wil|low o|ver the riv|er wept,

◡　—　　◡　—　　◡　◡　　—　◡　—
And shook | the wave | as the wind | did sigh ,

◡　—　◡　◡　—　◡　◡
Above | in the wind | was the swal|low,

—　◡　　◡　—　◡　◡　　—　　—　—
Chas ing | itself | at its own | wild will,

◡　—　　◡　◡　—　◡　—
And far | thro' the mar|ish green | and still |

◡　—　◡　—　◡　—　◡　—
The tan|gled wa|ter cour|ses slept,

◡　—　◡　◡　—　◡　◡　　—　　◡　—
Shot o|ver with pur|ple and green, | and yel|low

III

◡　—　　◡　—　◡　—　◡　—
The wild | swan's death |hymn took | the soul

◡　—　　—　—　　◡　—
Of that | waste place | with joy

—　◡　◡　—　◡　◡　—　◡　◡　—
Hidden | in sor|row　at first | to the ear

◡　—　◡　◡　—　◡　—　◡　—
The war|ble was low, | and full | and clear ,

◡　—　◡　—　◡　—　◡　—
And float|ing about | the un|der-sky,

◡　—　◡　◡　—　◡　◡　—　◡　◡　—
Prevail|ing in weak|ness, the cor|onach stole

—　◡　◡—　◡　—　◡　◡　—
Some|times afar, | and some|times anear ,

◡　◡—　◡　—　◡　—　◡—
But anon | her aw|ful ju|bilant voice,

◡　◡　—　◡　—　◡　—◡—
With a mu|sic strange | and man|ifold,

—　　—　　◡　◡—　◡　—　　◡　—
Flow'd forth | on a car|ol free | and bold ,

◡　—　◡　—　◡　—　◡　◡　—
As when | a might|y peo|ple rejoice

◡●　—　　◡　◡　◡　—　◡　—
With shawms, | and with cym|bals, and harps | of gold,

  ᵕ ᵕ   ᵕ ᵕ   –   ᵕ –   ᵕ ᵕ
And the tu|mult of their | acclaim | is roll'd

  ᵕ   ᵕ – ᵕ   –   ᵕ ᵕ – ᵕ ᵕ–
Thro' the o|pen gates | of the ci|ty afar,

  ᵕ ᵕ   –   ᵕ ᵕ   ᵕ   ᵕ ᵕ–ᵕ   –   –
To the shep|herd who watch|eth the e|vening star

  ᵕ   ᵕ   –   ᵕ – ᵕ ᵕ   –   ᵕ ᵕ   –
And the creep|ing moss|es and clam|bering weeds,

 –   ᵕ   – ᵕ   ᵕ   –   ᵕ   –
And the wil'low-bran|ches hoar | and dank,

  ᵕ   ᵕ   – ᵕ   –   ᵕ ᵕ   –   ᵕ –
And the wa|vy swell | of the sough|ing reeds,

  ᵕ ᵕ   –   –   –   ᵕ ᵕ –   ᵕᵕ   –
And the wave-|worn horns | of the ech|oing bank,

  ᵕ   ᵕ – ᵕᵕ   –   ᵕ   –
And the sil|very mar|ish-flowers | that throng

  ᵕ – ᵕ ᵕ   –   ᵕ   –   ᵕ –
The de|solate creeks | and pools | among,

  ᵕ   –   ᵕ – ᵕ   ᵕᵕ –
Were flood|ed o|ver with ed|dying song.

This piece, with the "Hollyhock" (*v sup* p 27), Blake's "Mad Song" (§ XXXV), Shelley's "Cloud" (note, p 100), and the *Christabel* selections (§ XXXVIII), will almost completely exemplify substitution in lyric But the germ is far older—in Shakespeare, in "E I O," and even in pieces earlier still

XLIV The Stages of the Metre of "Dolores" and the Dedication of "Poems and Ballads"

This remarkable measure illustrates, with especial appositeness, the natural history of metrical evolution, and so may be dealt with more fully as a specimen There can be little doubt that its original, or the earliest form to which it can be traced, is the split Alexandrine or three-foot iambic, which appears in the French of Philippe de Thaun, and in several English poems, such as the *Bestiary*, translated from Philippe's—

> After | him he | filleth,
> Drageth | dust with | his stert,

and as even *King Horn* But this gives far too little room

in English , and the rhymes, when rhyme is introduced, come too quick   Substitution of trisyllabic feet remedies both faults , while the actual six, with *interchanged* rhyme, gives beautiful work, though the lines are still rather short

> With lon|gyng y | am lad,
> On mol|de I wax|e mad,
> a maid|e mar|reth me ,
> Y grede, | y grone, | un-glad,
> For sel|den y | am sad
> that sem|ly for | te se ,
> Levedi, | thou rew|e me,
> To rou|the thou havest | me rad ,
> Be bote | of that | y bad,
> My lyf | is long | on the
>   (Wright's *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*, No vii)

This shortness kept it back, more especially when the fear of *mainly* trisyllabic measures came in after the fifteenth - century anarchy   But as soon as that fear disappeared, and the anapæst forced itself into general use, logic, assisted by tune, suggested a cutting down of the popular dimeter or four-foot anapæstic line to three This, for a long time, maintained itself in strict literature without much variety of structure, as, at different times, is shown by Shenstone in the well-known—

> Since Phyl|lis vouchsafed | me a look,
> I nev|er once dreamt | of my vine ,
> May I lose | both my pipe | and my crook,
> If I know | of a kid | that is mine ,

and by Cowper in the still better known "Alexander Selkirk " lines—

> I am mon|arch of all | I survey,
> My right | there is none | to dispute
> From the cen|tre all round | to the sea
> I am lord | of the fowl | and the brute ,

and in " Catherina "—

> She came— | she is gone— | we have met,
> And meet | perhaps nev|er again
> The sun | of that mo|ment is set
> And seems | to have ris|en in vain

I

Now, though these lines are pretty, they are exposed to the charge of being pretty sing-song, and monotonous jingle   But this had, long before Cowper, been to a great extent remedied, though for comic purposes only or mainly, in such things as Gay's " Molly Mog," quoted above, and Chesterfield-Pulteney's

> Had I Hanover, Bremen, and Ver|den,
>   And likewise the Duchy of Zell,
> I would part with them all for a far|thing,
>   To have my dear Molly Lepell !

(Pronounce " Verden " with the proper English value of *er*, and give "farthing" its then correct form of " farden," and the rhyme will be spotless)

What it was that made Byron take this up for a serious purpose in the lines to Haidee (before *Don Juan*) is not, I believe, known

> I en|ter thy gar|den of ro|ses,
>   Belov|ed and fair | Haidee,
> Each morn|ing where Flo|ra repo|ses,
>   For sure|ly I see | her in thee

The gain here, from the redundant syllable and double rhyme in the odd lines, and from a rather more frequent use of *dissyllabic* feet to prevent monotony, is immense Praed adopted the measure, and improved it still further, in his admirable " Letter of Advice "

> Remem|ber the thrill|ing roman|ces
>   We read | on the bank | in the glen ,
> Remem|ber the suit|ors our fan|cies
>   Would pic|ture for both | of us then
> They wore | the red cross | on their shoul|der,
>   They had van|quished and par|doned their foe—
> Sweet friend, | are you wi|ser or cold|er ?
>   My own | Aramin|ta, say " No ! "

And then Mr Swinburne had the probably final inspiration of shortening the last line to two feet (or an anapæstic monometer), with an astonishing result of added and finished music .   •

> Though the ma|ny lights dwin|dle to one | light,
>   There is help | if the heav|en has one,
> Though the skies | be discrowned | of the sun|light,
>   And the earth | dispossessed | of the sun,
> They have moon|light and sleep | for repay |ment
>   When, refreshed | as a bride | and set free,
> With stars | and sea-winds | in her rai|ment,
>   Night sinks | on the sea.

XLV Long Metres of Tennyson, Browning, Morris, and Swinburne

(*a*) Tennyson (*The Lotos-Eaters*)

For they | lie be|side their | nectar, | and the | bolts are | hurl'd

Far be|low them | in the | valleys, | and the | clouds are | lightly | curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world,

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,

Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery winds,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands

(Trochaic six- and seven-foot lines, always hypercatalectic, or, in stricter language, trochaic trimeters hypercatalectic and tetrameters catalectic)

At the close the poet avails himself of the iambic alternative which is so effective, and has a pure fourteener

O rest | ye, bro|ther ma|riners, | we will | not wan|der more |

(There is no trisyllabic substitution)

(*b*) Tennyson (*Maud*)

Cold and clear cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,

Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,

Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,

Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound ,

Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong

Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before

Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,

Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
ᴗ ᴗ ‒
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
ᴗ ‒
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave

(A rather deceptive metre , for which reason foot-division has been postponed above)   It may look at first sight like a trochaic run, but this will be found not to fit   Then hexameters of the *Evangeline* type, with a syllable cut off at the end, suggest themselves , but it will be seen that some openings make this very bad   It is really a six-foot anapæst with the usual allowance of iambic substitution and of monosyllabic (" anacrustic ") beginning, as thus

Cold | and clear-|cut face, | why come | you so cru|elly meek,
              .

But arose, | and all | by myself | in my own | dark gar|den ground,
                      .   .

The shin|ing daf|fodil dead, | and Ori|on low | in his grave

(*c*) Tennyson (*Voyage of Maeldune*)

And we came | to the Isle | of Flowers | their breath | met us out | on
    the seas,
For the Spring | and the mid|dle Sum|mer sat each | on the lap | of
    the breeze ,
And the red | passion flower | to the cliffs, | and the dark-|blue
    clem|atis, clung,
And starr'd | with a myr|iad blos|som the long | convol|vulus hung

(Same metre, but almost purely anapæstic , the central pause frequently strong)

(*d*) Tennyson (*Kapiolani*)

When   from the | ter rors of | Na ture a | peo ple have | fash ioned
    and | wor ship a / spir it of | E vil

(Apparently intended for a dactylic *octometer*   Like all these things in English, it probably goes better as anapæstic with anacrusis and hypercatalexis.   See dotted scansion)

(e) Browning (*Abt Vogler*)

Would that the | struc ture | brave, the | man ifold | mu sic I | build, ·
  Bid ding my | or gan o|bey, || call ing its | keys to their | work,
Claim ing each | slave of the | sound at a | touch, as when |
  So lomon | willed
Ar mies of | an gels that | soar, || le gions of | de mons that | lurk
Man, brute | reptile, | fly, || alien of | end and of | aim,
  Ad verse | each from the | oth er, | hea ven high | hell- deep
  re|moved,—
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineff able name,
  And pile him a pal ace straight, to plea sure the prin cess he loved

(Note the alliteration)

At first, as you read this, you can, if your ears are accustomed to classical metres, have no doubt about the scheme It is simply the regular elegiac couplet "accentually" rendered in English, with the abscission of the last syllable of the hexameter—a catalectic hexameter and a pentameter acatalectic For the first four lines of the first octave there is no doubt at all But when you get on to the second half you are pulled up In the fifth and sixth lines the pentameter seems to have got to the first place, and the seventh is no more a hexameter than the eighth is its proper companion For a moment you may fancy that this was intended—that the poet meant octaves of two different parts But when you look at the other stanzas you will find that this is by no means the case Truncated elegiac cadence appears, reappears, disappears in the most bewildering fashion, till you recognise—sooner or later according to your prosodic experience—that it was only simulated cadence after all, a sort of leaf-insect rhythm, and that the whole thing (as marked by the dotted scansion lines) is in six-foot anapæsts equivalenced daringly, but quite legitimately, with monosyllabic and dissyllabic feet

(f) W Morris ("The Wind ")

Ah ' | no, no, | it is no|thing, sure|ly no|thing, at all,
On|ly the wild-|going wind | round | by the gar|den wall,
For the dawn | just now | is break|ing, the wind | begin|ning to fall.
      Wind, wind, | thou art | sad, art | thou kind?
      Wind, | wind, | unhap|py ! thou | ai tublind,
      Yet still | thou wan|derest | the lil|y-seed | to find

(First three lines six-foot (trimeter) anapæsts with full substitution   Refrain a graded "wheel" of four, four *or* five, and six iambic feet)

(*g*) Morris (*Love is Enough*) ·

Such words shall my ghost see the chronicler writing
In the days that shall be—ah '—what would'st more, my fosterling ?
Knowest thou not how words fail us awaking,
That we seemed to hear plain amid sleep and its sweetness

(Intentionally irregular "accentual" lines, but with an anapæstic or amphibrachic "under-hum"   There is a good deal of alliteration elsewhere, and some here

(*h*) Morris (*Sigurd* metre, but the actual example from *The House of the Wolfings*)

Thou sayest it, I am outcast || for a God that lacketh mirth
Hath no more place in God-home || and never a place on earth
A man grieves, and he gladdens, || or he dies and his grief is gone ,
But what of the grief of the Gods? and || the sorrow never undone ?
Yea, verily, I am the outcast || When first in thine arms I lay,
On the blossoms of the woodland || my godhead passed away ,
Thenceforth unto thee I was looking || for the light and the glory of life,
And the Gods' doors shut behind me || till the day of the uttermost strife
And now thou hast taken my soul, thou || wilt cast it into the night,
And cover thine head with the darkness || and cover thine eyes from the light
Thou would'st go to the empty country || where never a seed is sown,
And never a deed is fashioned || and the place where each is alone ,
But I thy thrall shall follow, || I shall come where thou seem'st to lie,
I shall sit on the howe that hides thee, || and thou so dear and nigh '
A few bones white in their war gear, || that have no help or thought,
Shall be Thiodolf the Mighty, || so nigh, so dear—and nought '

(A splendid construction from older and newer examples Strongly stressed, strictly middle-paused, but perfectly regular anapæstic sixes, with substitution *and a hyper-catalectic syllable or half foot at the pause*)

(*i*) Mr   Swinburne (*Hesperia* and *Evening on the Broads*)

The first line of *Hesperia* is practically a ‚Kingsleyan hexameter (*v inf*) of the very best kind—

Out | of the gold|en remote | wild west | where the sea | without
 shore | is ,

while the second—

 Full of the sunset and sad if at all with the fulness of joy,

is a pentameter of similar mould, with the centre gap
cunningly filled in by the two short stitches "if at,"
capable, as you see below in

 Thee I beheld as bird borne in with the wind from the west,

of being duly equivalenced with one long stitch, like
"borne" Yet the second line is capable also of being
scanned exactly as the first—anacrusis and five anapæsts
—but without the final redundance or hypercatalexis ,
and in other long lines you will find that the principle of
equivalence is preserved throughout—that two shorts, as in

 ◡ ◡
As a wind | blows in | from the au|tumn that blows | from the re|gion
 of stories,

defeat the hexametrical movement, and pull off the mask at
the beginning, though it returns at the end The metre
is really anapæstic throughout And in *Evening on the
Broads* the poet has carried this further still, providing in
some cases regular apparent elegiacs

O|ver the sha|dowless wa|ters a drift | as a pin|nace in per|il,
 Hangs | as in hea|vy sus pense ‖ charged | with ir re|solute light

 (*j*) Mr Swinburne (*Choriambics*)

  — ◡ — ◡ ◡ — — ◡ ◡ — — ◡ ◡
Love, what | ailed thee to leave | life that was made | lovely we
   — ◡ —
 thought | with love ?—

 (*k*) Mr Swinburne (other long anapæstic and trochaic
measures)

If again | from the night | or the twi|light of a|ges Aris|tophanes | had
 ari|sen.

    ·
That the sea | was not love|lier than here | was the land, nor the
 night ↳ than the day, | nor the day | than the night
              ·

Night is | utmost | noon, for|lorn and | strong, with | heart a|thirst
    and | fasting

Till the dark|ling desire | of delight | shall be far, | as a fawn | that is
    free | from the fangs | that pur‿ue | her

(These are respectively seven-foot anapæsts with redun-
dance (anapæstic tetrameter catalectic), ditto eight-foot
(tetrameter acatalectic), trochaic tetrameter acatalectic,
and anapæstic tetrameter hypercatalectic (eight feet and
a half))

XLVI THE LATER SONNET

(To illustrate the strict octave and sextet pattern with
final rhymes adjusted on the Italian pattern)

Dante Rossetti

    Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
       — ◡   ◡ ◡   —
    Terror | and mys|tery, guard | her shrine, I saw
    Beauty enthroned, and though her gaze struck awe,
    I drew it in as simply as my breath
    Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath
      The sky and sea, bend o'er thee—which can draw
      By sea, or sky, or woman, to one law
      ◡ ◡ —
    The allot|ted burden of her palm and wreath

    This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
      Thy voice and hand shake still—long known to thee
                 ◡ ◡ —
      By flying hair and flut|tering hem|—the beat
      — ◡ ◡
      Following | her daily of thy heart and feet
       ◡ ◡ —
    How pas|sionately | and irretrievably
    In what fond flight, how many ways and days !

XLVII THE VARIOUS ATTEMPTS AT "HEXAMETERS"
IN ENGLISH

(*a*) Earlier (Elizabethan)·

All travel|lers do | gladly re|port great | praise of U|lysses,

                —
For that he | knew many | men's man|ners and | saw many | cities
          (Watson, ap Asch *Schoolmaster*, p 73, ed Arber)

But the | Queene in | meane while | carks quan|dare deepe | anguisht,
Her wound | fed by Ve|nus, with | firebayt | smoldred is | hooked
Thee wights | doughtye man|hood, leagd | with gen|tilytye | nobil,
His woords | fitlye | placed, with his | heunly | phisnomye | pleasing,
March throgh her | hert mas|tring, all in | her breste | deepelye she |
  printeth
      (Stanyhurst, *Æn* iv 1-5, ed Arber, p 94)

What might I | call this | tree ? A | Laurell ? | O bonny | Laurell
Needes to thy | bowes will I | bow this | knee and | viyle my bo|netto
    (Harvey in letter to Spenser, *Eliz Crit Essays*,
       ed Gregory Smith, i 106)

See yee the | blindefold|ed pretie | god, that | feathered | archer

Of lo|vers mise|ries || which maketh | his bloodie | game
     (Spenser in letter to Harvey, *ibid* i 99)

(All these tried to *accommodate* — though sometimes
rather roughly—English pronunciation to such of the rules
of Latin quantity, by " nature " and "position," as could
be applied Some of them even tried to make general
rules for English quantity But the wiser, from Ascham
to Campion, admitted that dactylic rhythm was difficult, if
not impossible, to keep up in our language)

 (*b*) Later Georgian and Victorian

 (1) Coleridge (Specimen *c* 1799 ?)

In the hex|am eter | ri ses the | foun tain's | sil very | col umn ;
In the pen|ta meter | aye || fall ing in | mel ody | back

(A very fair attempt, but already showing the natural
tendency of the lines, when *poetically* rhythmed, to anapæstic
—the dotted—scansion)

 (2) Southey (*Vision of Judgment*)

'Twas at that | sober | hour when the | light of | day is re|ceding
And from sur|rounding | things the | hues wherewith | day has a|dorned
  them
Fade like the | hopes of | youth, till the | beauty of | each has de|parted.

(Anapæstic run avoided with some skill, save now and
then , but at the cost of weak beginnings, frequent, and

admitted, substitution of trochaic for spondaic effect, and, above all, as in line 1, an ugly rocking-horse division into *three* batches of two feet each instead of the proper $2\frac{1}{2} + 3\frac{1}{2}$ or $3\frac{1}{2} + 2\frac{1}{2}$)

(3) Longfellow (*Evangeline*)

Long with|in had been | spread the | snow - white | cloth on the | table ,
There stood the | wheaten | loaf, and the | honey | fragrant with | wild flowers ,
There stood the | tankard of | ale and the | cheese fresh | brought | from the | dairy ,
And at the | head of the | board the | great arm-|chair of the | farmer
Thus did Ev|angeline | wait at her | father's | door as the | sunset
Threw the long | shadows of | trees o'er the | broad am|brosial | meadows
Ah ' on her | spirit with|in a | deeper | shadow had | fallèn

(A popular, tunable sort of rhythm, obtained by a very large proportion of dactyls—often really giving (and always when really good) the anapæstic effect,— unhesitating adoption of trochees and even pyrrhics for spondees, and not seldom the Southeyan split at feet 2 and 4 An essentially *rickety* measure)

(4) Clough—earlier (in the *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich— Evangeline* type, but with more spondees and spondaic endings)

I was quite | right last | night, it | is too | soon, too | sudden

(5) Later he attempted English "quantitative" things of this kind

To the pal|ate grate|ful , more | luscious | were not in | Eden ,
and

Unto the | sweet flut|ing, girls, of a swarthy shepherd

This deliberate *neglect* of pronunciation ("palate" for "palate," "shepherd" for "shepherd ") has, in the last half-century or so, developed itself into a still more de-

liberate crusade *against* pronunciation, it being supposed that a conflict of accent and quantity has something attractive about it   Thus the late Mr Stone wrote as a hexameter

$$\text{Is my} \mid \overset{\smile}{\text{w}}\text{eary tra}\overset{-}{\mid}\text{vail}^1\text{ end}\overset{-}{\mid}\text{ed}? \text{ Much} \mid \text{further is} \mid \overset{-}{\text{in}}\text{ store}$$

(6) On the other hand, Kingsley's *Andromeda*—the best poem of some length intended for English hexameters—is clearly, though not consciously, anapæstic, as thus

O|ver the moun|tain aloft | ran a rush | and a roll | and a roar | ing
Down|ward the breeze | came malig|nant and leapt | with a howl | to
    the wa|ter,
Roar|ing in cran|ny and crag | till the pil|lars and clefts | of the
    ba|salt
Rang | like a god-|swept lyre

And Mr Swinburne did the same thing (see above) consciously

XLVIII   Minor Imitations of Classical Metres

(*a*) Sapphics (*Watts*)
    When the | fierce North-|wind with his | airy | forces
    Bears up | the Bal|tic to a | foaming | fury,
    And the | red light|ning with a | storm of | hail comes
        Rushing a|main down

This illustrates—as do the pieces which it, beyond all doubt, patterned, though in succession rather than directly (Cowper's " Hatred and Vengeance," Southey's " Cold was the Night Wind," and Canning's triumphant parody of this latter, the " Needy Knifegrinder ")—the unyoke-ableness of classical metres — when not merely iambic, trochaic, or anapæstic—to English rhythm   The proper run of the Sapphic line is—

$$\text{tumti-tumtum-tumtity-tumti-tum} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ti} \\ \text{tum} \end{array} \right.,$$

---

[1] I regret that in my larger *History* (iii 430-431) I did not notice the misprint of " travel " , metrically, however, it makes no real difference

but this constantly in English, though not so much in the
first line as elsewhere, changes itself into

$$\text{tumtity-tum} \begin{cases} \text{tum} \\ \text{-ti} \end{cases} \| \text{ tumtiti-titumty}$$

Mr Swinburne has got it right, but only as a *tour de force*,
and, as in line 2, not always quite certainly

> Saw the | white im|placable | Aphro|dite,
> Saw the | hair un|bound and the | feet un|sandalled
> Shine as | fire of | sunset on | western | waters,
>   Saw the re|luctant

But Southey and Canning always suggest the wrong

> — ◡ ◡ — ⌣ — ◡ ◡ ◡ — ◡
> She had no home, the world was all before her,

and

> — ◡ ◡ — ◡ — ◡ ◡ ◡ — ◡
> Story, sir? Bless you ! I have none to tell you ,

(*b*) Alcaics (Tennyson)

> O migh|ty mouthed | in|ventor of | harmonies,
> O skilled | to sing | of | Time or E|ternity,
>   God gift|ed or|gan voice | of Eng|land,
>   Milton, a | name to re|sound for | ages

(Correct, but not natural)

(*c*) Hendecasyllabics (Coleridge)

> Hear, my be|loved, an | old Mi|lesian | story '—
> High, and em|bosom'd in | congre|gated | laurels,
> Glimmer'd a temple upon a breezy headland ,
> In the dim distance, amid the skiey billows,
> Rose a fair island , the god of flocks had blest it

(These very pretty lines exhibit a most curious instance
of the unconscious force of the prosodic genius of a
language   Coleridge was a good classical scholar, and
quite enough of a mathematician to know the difference
between 11 and 12   Yet every one of these *hendeca-*
syllabics will be found to be a *dodeca*syllabic , the poet
having substituted (as in English prosody is quite allowable)
an initial dactyl for the dissyllabic foot of the original
metre   Once more this shows the English *impatience* of
classical form)   ‟

(*d*) Hendecasyllabics (Tennyson)

> O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
> Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
> Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
> All composed in a metre of Catullus
>
> .
>
> Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
> So fantastical is the dainty metre

A triumph, but a criticism as well, as its own ending shows

> As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost
> Horticultural art—

or "*versi*cultural" rather

(*e*) Galliambics

These have been tried splendidly by Tennyson in *Boadicea*, interestingly by Mr George Meredith in *Phaethon*, unsuccessfully by the late Mr Grant Allen in his version of the *Atys* of Catullus But the metre is not quite plain sailing even in Greek and Latin, and it is therefore better to leave it alone here and return to it in Glossary

XLIX IMITATIONS OF ARTIFICIAL FRENCH FORMS

(*a*) Triolet

> Rose kissed | me to day
>   Will she kiss | me to mor|row ?
> Let it be | as it may,
> Rose kissed | me to day
> But the plea|sure gives way
>   To a sa|vour of sor|row ,—
> Rose kissed | me to day,—
>   *Will* she kiss | me to-morrow ?

(*b*) Rondeau

> With pipe and flute the rustic Pan
> Of old made music sweet for man ,
>   And wonder hushed the warbling bird,
>   And closer drew the calm eyed herd,—
> The rolling river slowlier ran●

Ah ! would,—ah ! would, a little span,
Some air of Arcady could fan
  This age of ours, too seldom stirred
           With pipe and flute !

But now for gold we plot and plan ,
And from Beersheba unto Dan,
  Apollo's self might pass unheard,
  Or find the night jar's note preferred ,—
Not so it fared, when time began,
           With pipe and flute !

(The number of lines in a rondeau is not immutable, nor is it in a rondel, where the principle is the return of whole lines as in the triolet, but, since the poem is longer, giving room for more *not* repeated matter)

(*c*) Ballade

Ship, to the roadstead rolled,
  What dost thou ?—O, once more
Regain the port   Behold !
  Thy sides are bare of oar,
  Thy tall mast wounded sore
Of Africus, and see,
  What shall thy spars restore ?—
Tempt not the tyrant sea !

What cable now will hold
  When all drag out from shore ?
What god canst thou, too bold,
  In time of need implore ?
  Look ! for thy sails flap o'er,
Thy stiff shrouds part and flee,
  Fast—fast thy seams outpour,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea !

What though thy ribs of old
  The pines of Pontus bore !
Not now to stern of gold
  Men trust, or painted prore !
  Thou, or thou count'st it store
A toy of winds to be,
  Shun thou the Cyclads' roar,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea !

ENVOY

Ship of the State, before
A care, and now to me
A hope in my heart's core,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea '

(All these examples are Mr Austin Dobson's, and inserted here by his kind permission   It will be observed that the *lines* follow general English prosodic rules   It is only the stanza that is borrowed)

L   LATER RHYMELESSNESS

(*a*) M Arnold (*The Strayed Reveller*   Words printed exactly as original, except the added "*and*", the also added brackets show the unconscious decasyllabism)

[Ever new magic '
Hast thou then lured hither,]
[Wonderful Goddess, by thy art,
The young], [languid-eyed Ampelus,
Iacchus' darling—]

[They see the Indian
Drifting, knife in hand,]
[His frail boat moor'd to
A floating isle thick-matted]
[With large leaved [*and*] low creeping melon leaves,]
[*x*]   And the dark cucumber
[He reaps, and stows them,
Drifting—drifting ,—round him,
[Round his green harvest plot,
Flow the cool lake-waves,]
[*y*]   The mountains ring them

(Here the first piece is three pure decasyllables, with redundance, cut into five   The second requires only the addition of the italicised "and" to make it a complete blank-verse passage with two shortened lines or half-lines, *x* and *y*, of the kind common in Shakespeare   The poem is crammed with shorter stanza-pieces of the same kind)

(*b*) Mr Henley ("Speed"   Printed as original and as prose)

Roads where the stalwart
Soldier of Cæsar
Put by his bread
And his garlic, and girding
[His conquering sword
To his unconquered thigh,]
Lay down in his armour,
And went to his Gods
By the way that he'd made

Roads where the stalwart soldier of Cæsar put by his bread and his garlic, and girding [his conquering sword to his unconquered thigh,] lay down in his armour, and went to his Gods by the way he had made

(The decasyllable is not quite avoided even here, as in the bracketed phrase   But the main point is that the thing reads perfectly well as prose, with no obvious suggestion of metre at all)

LI   Some "Unusual" Metres and Disputed Scansions

Some measures of recent poets have been objected, or at least proposed, as offering difficulties in respect of the system of this book   It has therefore seemed well to scan them here

(*a*) Frederic Myers (*St Paul*)

Yes, with|out   cheer | of   sis|ter   or | of   daugh|ter—
Yes, with|out   stay | of   fa|ther   or | of   son—
Lone on | the land | and home|less on | the water
Pass I | in pa|tience till | the work | be done

(There is nothing very peculiar or at all original in this, though it was probably now first used continuously for a poem of some length   It is only decasyllabic quatrain with uniform redundance in the first and third lines, and a strong inclination to trochaic opening, which in its turn suggests a primary dactyl and trochees to follow, as an alternative (see dotted scansion)   Examples of it anterior

to Myers may be found—commented on in the larger *History* (vol III 481)—in *Zophiel*, very likely known to Myers, as he was much connected by family friendship with the Lake School , in the famous poem

> From the lone sheiling on the misty island,

the authorship of which has been so much contested , and in Emily Bronte's *Remembrance* (see again vol III of *Hist Pros* p 378), of which he cannot possibly have been ignorant [1] His own share in the matter would seem to have been limited to the persevering adoption of it in an unvaried form Whether this be an advantage or not is a question of taste the prosodic description of the metre is clear and in no way recondite)

(*b*) Ernest Dowson (*Cynara*) [*Non sum qualis eram*, etc]

Last night, | ah ' yes|ter night | betwixt | her lips | and mine
  There fell | thy sha|dow, Cy|nara ! | thy breath | was shed
Upon | my soul | between | the kiss|es and | the wine,
And I | was de|solate, | and sick | of an | old passion ,
  Yea, I | was de|solate | and bowed | my head
I have | been faith|ful to | thee, Cy|nara, in | my fashion

(Sextet of Alexandrines with decasyllable (or brachy-catalexis) in the 5th line, and with hypercatalexis, redundance, or double rhyme in the 4th and 6th An original collocation, so far as I know, but nothing new or strange in principle The actual poem is a rather beautiful one , but how much is contributed to the beauty by the special metre is another question At any rate, once more, it has no difficulties for foot-scansion)

(*c*) The universally known passage in *Macbeth*—

> To-morrow and to-morrow and to morrow,

with the following lines, has also been proposed as a *crux* But this must have been a not very brilliant joke , and it would be an insult to the student to scan the passage It

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[1] In fact, there are even much older examples, as in Cleveland's *Mark Antony* and some things of Dryden s, on one of their possible scansions, see *Hist Pros* III chap III

is one of the finest specimens of Shakespearian equivalence and " fingered " blank verse, but offers no more difficulties, on the system of this book, than any couplet of Pope or any verse of the " Old Hundredth "   On the other hand, many passages of Shakespeare may not illegitimately puzzle the student if he does not realise that, although (it is believed) every line which is not corrupt can be scanned on our system, every line is by no means an exact five-foot In accordance with the best English practice, older and newer, Shakespeare does not scruple to *extend* his lines to Alexandrines, and even to fourteeners, while the exigencies of drama entitle him to use lines of *less* than five full feet *But all these—the fragments as well as the extended lines— obey the general law of iambic arrangement with substitution in individual feet*   Thus in Lady Macbeth's invocation of the Spirits of Evil (I v 49)—

And take | my milk | for gall, | you mur|dering min|isters,

is a regular Alexandrine   Her husband's hallucination—

I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this | which now | I draw,

stops in the second line at the third foot   Different lines of the ghost's great speech in *Hamlet* (I v 42-91) show the Alexandrine—

O, hor|rible ! | O, hor|rible ! | most hor|rible !

and a fragment of two feet and a half—

All my | smooth bo|dy

If studied in this way, even the scenes where short speeches of the conversational kind form the staple will be found to piece themselves together perfectly well in continuous scansion

BOOK II

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ENGLISH PROSODY

CHAPTER I

FROM THE ORIGINS TO CHAUCER—THE CONSTITUTION
OF ENGLISH VERSE [1]

THE main fact, at once central and fundamental—a pivot whereon the whole structure at once rests and turns,— which it is necessary to understand in order to understand English prosody, is connected with—is indeed one side or case of—the other fact of the history of English language and English literature   So far as is known to the present writer, no other language and no other literature stand in precisely the same condition, as regards the relation of their technically "Old," "Middle," and "New" or "Modern" forms   The relation of what is called "Old" French to Modern is not that of "Old   English to Modern, but rather that of "Middle," if not a closer one still   And though "High" and "Low" German have had their various stages separated for philological purposes, the Continental Teutonic dialects have never undergone anything like the process of modification by Romance influence, older and younger, popular and literary, which turned Anglo-Saxon into English between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries   This process was one not so much—if indeed it was one at all—of conscious borrowing it was one not so much of deliberate imitation (though

Relations of "Old" to "Middle" and "New" English

---

[1] Running illustrations of the following chapters will be found in the preceding Scanned Conspectus, but additional ones will be supplied in notes when necessary   It may not be superfluous to call the student's special attention to this chapter   All correct appreciation of English prosody depends upon the facts contained in it , and while the ignoring or mistaking of these facts is fatal, it has unfortunately been too common

generally,   there was much of that in a way) as one of actual physical
impregnation, fertilising, blending, which resulted in a true
and permanent " cross " or " hybrid perpetual," possessing
and exercising the faculties of self-development and self-
propagation

In perhaps no way were these faculties more strikingly
and remarkably exercised and illustrated than in regard
to prosody , and it must, unluckily, be added that in no
instance has their exercise been more frequently and more
fatally misconstrued   The present writer begins a fresh
attempt to set forth what really happened with the following
encouragement—in the way of a reviewer's sentence on
and in   his earlier and larger effort—before his eyes   " Mr S 's
prosody   contention is that A S   prosody died out, and that
English prosody is entirely drawn from the Latin, with
the aid of French and Provençal "   Now the "contention"
of the *History of English Prosody* is as directly and deliber-
ately bent *against* this doctrine as against Dr Guest's theory,
that the principles of Anglo-Saxon prosody have governed
English throughout its course   These "falsehoods of
extremes " appear to have more lives than a cat, if not
as many heads as a hydra , and their main principle of
vitality no doubt is that it is possible to put them in plump
plain-looking phraseology "which the Beaver can well
understand "   What did actually happen was far less
simple , but the attempt to explain it must once more
be made

Anglo Saxon   As to what Anglo-Saxon prosody itself was, although,
prosody   as in all these matters, there are minor dissidences among
itself   the authorities, the main arrangement is sun-clear   There
is practically only one line , though (and the fact is of
inestimable importance, and when once really understood
will carry the understander through to the very present
day) the syllabic lengths of that line may differ largely
even in normal cases, and to an at first sight almost
irrational degree in what are called the "extended "
varieties   .   •

This normal line in its most normal condition—neither

cut short nor drawn out—consists usually of about nine
or ten syllables   These are not arranged so as to produce
a definite foot-rhythm, though there is a general suggestion
of the trochee   And attempts (not to be spoken of with any-
thing but encouragement and wishes for their success, if
with some doubt as to its attainment) have been made
to assign, in all cases, definite division into associations of
syllables which might be called "feet"   Other features
are unmistakable and incontestable   There is always a
sharp middle division—so strong that the lines may be,
and often are, printed as halves   There are always more
or fewer (most frequently two in the first half and one
in the second) *alliterated* syllables (one consonant or any
vowel)   And these syllables, with occasionally another or
so, are usually *accented*, but divided from each other by
a certain or uncertain number of *unaccented* ones   The
proportion and arrangement of these fall into the contro-
verted things, and the *extension* of the normal line is a
point only of indirect importance, though of very great
importance indirectly, here   The attempts which have
been made to trace ballad metre, nursery-rhyme metre, etc ,
to A S originals are also outside our limits   To the
present writer they appear to be hopelessly vitiated by two
absolutely certain facts . (1) that we do not know how
Anglo-Saxon was pronounced, (2) that its pronunciation,
whatever it was, must have been radically affected by the
changes which made it into Middle English   But four
cardinal points remain, of such importance that they cannot
be too attentively studied or too constantly remembered
They are these   that the oldest English prosody rested
on (1) a system of hard and fast middle pause, (2)
alliteration, distributed over the whole line, (3) accented
and unaccented syllables, the former usually knit to the
alliteration in some kind of sub-combination, but (4) that
the laws of this combination, and the principle on which
the sub-combinations could be substituted, omitted, or
multiplied, were of the freest description   It is said, and
it can well be believed, that they forbade some things

It is certain that they permitted very many, combining
the freest *substitution* in the same line, of the kind observ-
able in the Latin and Greek hexameter or trimeter, with
an apparent variety of lengths, in different lines, hardly
inferior to that of a Greek chorus or ode.

This prosody governed English verse from a time
certainly anterior to the existence of any "English"
nationality to about 1000 A D, the great bulk of the
production resulting under it being considerably older
than the last-named date   At or about that date, certainly
before the "Conquest," it began to be subjected to de-
vitalising and disintegrating influences, not necessary to be
discussed in detail here   The important fact is that from
c 1000 to *c* 1200 the existing amount of Old English
verse is very small indeed, and that, even in the few
existing probably dated examples, singular changes begin

Prosody of
the Transi
tion to
Middle
English

to exhibit themselves   In the "Rhyming Poem"
(before 1000 ?) the introduction of the element indicated
in the title completely revolutionises the system [1]   In the
"Grave Poem" (*c* 1100 ?) a new element of rhythm
appears, the tendency being, here and henceforth, to
substitute iambic, varied by anapæstic, cadence for the
general trochaic run, and to associate two lines or four
halves in a kind of quatrain [2]   In the remarkable frag-
ments of St Godric (1150 ?) rhyme, which does not appear
in the "Grave Poem," assists the rhythmical tendency
of this latter to make a new music, [3] and the well-known
"Canute Song" [4] chimes in   While if the "Paternoster"
be really of the twelfth century, as some have said, there

---

[1] Werig winneth   widsith onginneth
Sar ne sinneth   sorgum cinnith
Blæd his blumith   blisse linnath
Listum linneth   lastum ne linneth

[2] *V sup* Scanned Survey II
[3] *V sup* Scanned Survey III

[4] Merie sungen the muneches binnen Ely
Tha Cnut ching rew therby
Roweth cnihtes neer the land
And here we thes muneches sang

are in it iambic dimeter couplets [1] of a kind which never, by any chance, suggests itself in the whole corpus of Anglo-Saxon poetry proper

This couplet is neither more nor less than a pair of iambic dimeters or " four-accent [' -beat '] lines in rising stress," shortened occasionally to seven syllables instead of eight, probably from the first also admitting extension, *not* by addition of feet, but by substitution of them   Two couplets, or two batches of short (half) lines, from Layamon will show the difference at once and unmistakably to any one who possesses an ear

Contrast in Layamon

> Eorles   ther com en ||
> riche   and wel   idone |
>
> $\qquad\bullet\qquad\qquad\bullet$
> $\smile\ -\ \smile\ -\ \smile\ -\ \smile\ -$
> Tha an|sweie|de Vor|tiger
> $\smile -\ \smile\ -\ \smile -\qquad \smile\ -$
> Of el|chen vu|el he | wes wer

The first distich, it will be observed, is a loose and broken-down one on the schemes of perfect O E verse There is hardly any real alliteration, and the accented syllables are clumsily placed and valued   But the thing does retain, and that pretty sufficiently, the strong centre pause, and the folding-back swing of the two halves, like those of a flail or a pair of lemon-squeezers, which are the real characteristics of O E or A S verse   It is not itself " riche " versification , it is not " wel idone ", but you cannot mistake it for anything but what it is

With the other you have got into a new world   There *is* alliteration here , but it has nothing on earth to do with the construction and run of the verse   There is what you may call accent if you insist upon it , but it is quite dif-

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[1] Vre feder thet in heouene is,
  That is al soothful iwis
  Wee moten to theos weordes iseon
  Thet to liue and to saule gode beon
  Thet weo beon swa his sunes iborene
  Thet he beo feder and we him icorene
  Thet we don alle his ibeden
  And his wille for to reden

ferently and much more regularly arranged, constituting, moreover, a rhythm perfectly distinct to the ear   There are two halves, but the second half is not so much a completion as a repetition   And instead of the strong middle break—a break and nothing else—the halves are tipped with *rhyme*—a division which, if they were printed straight on, you would not notice till you got to the end of the second, and which requires very little (hardly any) stop of the voice, while the breach of the old couplet insists on this.

Now the question legitimately suggests itself, " Why is this strange contrast present ? "—a contrast which, it should be added, is not only present but *omnipresent* in this great poem of 30,000 (half) lines in all forms, from something quite near the old A S line, through things farther from it, to imperfect forms of the new couplet and so to perfect ones   One answer is as follows   " This couplet was already established in *French* literature—in fact in the very French literature (Wace) which formed part of Layamon's originals   Moreover, it exists also in *Latin*—the Latin of the hymns with which the priest Layamon must have been perfectly familiar   When, therefore, it appears, he is simply imitating it with more or less success "   Now the facts of this answer, as far as they go, are indisputable   The octosyllabic couplet, though not so old as the decasyllabic *line* in O F, is very old, and by Layamon's time had been written very largely indeed   Octosyllabic lines, both of iambic and trochaic cadence, form the very staple of the Latin hymns , and both in Latin (earlier far) and in French, after a period of assonance, rhyme had thoroughly established itself

So far, so good , but it is to be hoped that intelligent minds will perceive an occurring difficulty   If this selection of metre is an elaborate attempt to imitate French or Latin, or both, why are its results so extraordinarily *sporadic*?   One could understand the presence of many imperfect lines and couplets , it might even be surprising that in a first attempt there should be such good ones as that above quoted   But how could the man, in an actual

majority of cases, produce stuff like the other distich
quoted, and many more unrhythmical still, which are not
even *attempts* at the iambic couplet—which have no con-
nection whatever with it ?

No, an explanation at once more subtle and more
natural is wanted, for it is a great mistake to think that
the subtler is necessarily the less natural   Does not this   Sufficient.
immense mass of apparently confused experiment suggest
that the language itself has passed into a new rhythmical
atmosphere?—that two different metrical systems, one
dropping and dying off ever fainter to the ear, the other
becoming clearer and clearer to it, were sounding in
Layamon's brain ?   Sometimes he writes under one in-
fluence, sometimes under the other, more frequently
under confused echoes of both   Such a set of causes
would produce exactly such a set of results

Nor is it of the slightest relevance, as an objection, to
say that the total number of new Romance *words* in
Layamon is very small—a couple of hundred perhaps in
both forms of the poem taken together   You do not
necessarily require one Romance word to fashion the
most complicated metres of Tennyson and Mr Swinburne
The point is, "What was the general *rhythm*, and what
were the means of obtaining it, which sounded most grate-
fully in English ears at the opening of the thirteenth
century and onwards ? "

The facts, if they, as they too seldom have been, are
carefully arranged and impartially considered, answer this
further question as clearly as any reasonable person can
desire

We possess a relatively considerable number of poems
composed probably between 1200 and 1250   The most
important of these are, besides Layamon's *Brut* itself, the
Ormulum, the *Poema Morale* or *Moral Ode*, the *Orison of
Our Lady*, a *Bestiary*, the *Proverbs of Alfred* and of
Hendyng, the *Love-Rune* and other minor pieces, the
Middle English *Genesis and Exodus*, and *The Owl and the
Nightingale*

Other documents.

Hardly two of these are in the same metre, at least in the same form of the same metre, and none of them exhibits exactly the same curious blend of old and new as that which appears in the *Brut* But, for that very reason, they enforce the same general lesson—for they do enforce it—in the most striking and conclusive way possible That lesson is, as we saw, that the new *language* of English was seeking in every possible way for a new *prosody* of English, and was finding it under several and special forms of experiment, but in the same general spirit

The *Ormulum*

Orm—evidently, from his punctilio about spelling,[1] a man curious and particular about details—adopts the French principle of absolute syllabic uniformity , though he does not accept any of the actually existing French metres, and rejects—possibly to save trouble, possibly as thinking them unsuitable to his sacred subject—both assonance and rhyme He writes—in the strictest and most humdrum iambic cadence, as of the least-inspired *French or Latin poetry*—"fifteeners " or combinations of eights and *sevens* Of the old long-lined stave he has kept no positive quality but its centre pause, and hardly any important negative one save its rhymelessness Of the new metre, he has aimed at—he has certainly reached—nothing but its foot-division and consequent rhythm But he has got these in the most pronounced, if hardly in the most attractive, form Except for the odd syllable, we are here already in full presence of the jog-trot ballad and hymn "common measure " of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Nay, this odd syllable itself is of great interest, for it reappears in the *sung* "breath " or "grunt "—"a ".

Your sad one tires in a mile-a, etc

The *Moral Ode* and the *Orison of Our Lady*

Opinions may differ slightly on the question whether this *fif*teener is actually the same as the *four*teener which later became so common, and which directly engendered the common measure itself , or whether the two were independent attempts to *metricise* the old long line It is

[1] In doubling the consonant after a short vowel-sound

of course clear that, as final *e*'s dropped off, fifteen would
become fourteen in any case   But in two of the poems
mentioned above, the *Moral Ode* and the *Orison of Our
Lady*, although the first-named has many fifteeners, and
the last is highly irregular, the set towards iambic seven-
foot rhythm is well marked   And there are two still more
interesting things about these two poems   We have
several versions of the *Poema Morale* which have been
arranged—*not* on prosodic grounds—in order of chrono-
logical sequence   And it is in the highest degree note-
worthy that the latest of these forms, like the later version
of Layamon, exhibits remarkable touches of prosodic
melioration   It is still more important that among the
irregular and experimental varieties of the *Orison* actual
iambic *decasyllables*, and, what is more, something like the
decasyllabic couplet, make their appearance nearly two
centuries before Chaucer [1]

These remarkable lessons in comparison are repeated, The
with the usual and invaluable confirmation of variety, *Proverbs of Alfred* and
in the curious documents called respectively the *Proverbs* *Hendyng*
of Alfred and the *Proverbs of Hendyng*   The relation, in
point of matter, of the latter to the former, and of the
former itself to a possible A S collection made by the
king, or under his auspices, need not concern us   It is
enough that our existing *Proverbs of Alfred* are M E
in language and early thirteenth century in date , while
those of " Hendyng " are perhaps half a century younger
These latter are slightly more modern in language ,
but this is accompanied by, and no doubt not a little
directly connected with, still greater modernisation of form
The earlier rehandler (or some of the rehandlers, for the
work is pretty certainly not of one only) evidently stuck
as near as he could to his original—words and all   But
he was, or they were, in Layamon's state—only more so
Rhyme appears fitfully , regular iambic and trochaic
rhythm more fitfully , alliteration most fitfully of all.   The

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[1] Examples of all this will be found in the Scanned Survey and in the
Glossaries and Form-lists of Book IV

various sections are stanza-bundles of short lines or half
lines, which, taken singly and printed straight on, might
tempt no very hasty, ill-informed, or unintelligent reader
to regard them as sheer prose, with an irregular sing-song
and jingle here and there   On the other hand, the
Proverbs of Hendyng are unmistakable English verse, the
stanza called in French *rime couée*, from the Latin *versus
caudatus* (afterwards common and famous as the six-line
stanza in which a very large proportion, if not the majority,
of our romances are written)   It is a combination of
eight- and six-syllabled lines arranged 8, 8, 6, 8, 8, 6, and
rhymed *aabccb*, the rhythm being regularly iambic, and
the whole differing in no respect from similar verse of
the nineteenth century, and in only one respect from
such as Gray's " Cat " ode in the eighteenth   And that
one is priceless, for it is the appearance of substitution—
the great English characteristic which separates our verse
from its French patterns—if patterns they were—which
the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries unwisely gave
up, for which Shenstone pleaded,[1] and which Chatterton,
and Blake, and Southey, and Coleridge restored   Mono-
syllabic and trisyllabic feet, as shown in the examples,[2]
are freely employed, and the result is that a double
advantage is secured   The actual shapelessness of one
direct parent, the broken-down A S versicle, is effectu-

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[1] For more on all this see Scanned Conspectus and next Book

[2] Thus queth Alured
    Wis childe is fader blisse
    If hit so bi-tideth
    that thu bern ibidest,
    the hwile hit is lutel
    ler him mon-thewes
    than hit is wexynde ,

hit schal wende thar to
the betere hit schal iwurthe
euer buuen eorthe,
ac if thu him lest welde
werende on worlde
lude and stille
his owene wille

Mon that wol of wysdam heren,
At wyse Hendyng he may lernen,
  That wes Marcolues sone ,
Gode thonkes and monie thewes
Forte teche fele shrewes ,
  For that wes ever is wone

Wis mon halt is wordes ynne,
For he nul no gle begynne
  Er he haue tempred is pype
Sot is sot, and that is sene,
1 or he wol speke wordes grene
  Er then hue buen type,
  " Sottes bolt is some shote,'
Quoth Hendyng

ally cured   there is no possibility of mistaking *this* com-
position for prose   The possible monotony and sing-song
of the other—the regular syllabic French model, long
afterwards parodied and exposed immortally in Chaucer's
Sir Thopas—is avoided likewise   There is a little assonance,
but for the most part quite regular and satisfactory rhyme
There is effective correspondent rhythm, resulting from
feet clearly marked, but, as has been said, boldly handled
in the English, not the French or Low Latin manner
The stanza is well kept, though the substitution prevents
its being a mere mechanic reproduction   In short, there
is freedom, and there is order

Not less worthy of study is the *Bestiary* [1]   Here the The
Bestiary
direct origins are fortunately known and are of the utmost
importance   The ultimate one is the Latin of Thetbaldus
in "Leonine" hexameters—that is to say, hexameters with,
in this case not very complete or regular, but still un-
mistakable, rhyme at the cæsura and the end   This gives
something of a ready - made correspondence to the old
A S line with its middle break, and, at the same time,
suggests rhyming halves   But there was also at hand a
French bestiary by Philippe de Thaun, where the writer,
taking the other already established hexameter-trimeter of
his own literature, the Alexandrine, breaks *it* into regular

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[1] *Latin*   Nam leo stans fortis super alta cacumina montis,
Qualicunque via vallis descendit ad ima,
Si venatorem per notum sentit odorem,
Cauda cuncta limit quae pes vestigia figit

French
Uncore dit Escripture   Desfait sa trace en terre,
Leuns ad tele nature,   Que hom ne l' sace querre,
Quant l om le vait chazant,   Ceo est grant signefiance,
De sa cue en fuiant   Aiez en remembrance

English
The leun stant on hille,   After him he filleth,
And he man hunten here,   Drageth dust with his stert
Other thurg his nese smel   Ther he [dun] steppeth,
Smake that he negge,   Other dust other deu,
Bi wilc weie so he wile   That he ne cunne is finden,
To dele nither wenden,   Driueth dun to his den
Alle hise fet-steppes   That he him bergen wille

six-syllabled couplets. The Englishman, whoever he was, endeavours to follow this arrangement, and perhaps something more He has got the six-syllable line and couplet in his ear, he has got even a sort of notion of stanza in addition, and he now and then hears rhyme But he is a very rough verse-smith, in the *Proverbs of Alfred* stage or near it, and he is perpetually hitting and missing cadences and constructions which were not to be perfected for long, but half developed—queer creatures rearing themselves from the earth like those in the old woodcuts of the Creation He has more variety than Layamon, and sometimes more music than the *Alfred* man, but with them he provides the great museum of examples of English verse in the first stage of making

Every now and then, too, he provides us with something that is not rough at all, as in the passage appended,[1] which is perfect modern English rhythm and goes to a well-known carol tune And of this more perfect craftsmanship, in forms precise enough to bring out the qualities and capacities of the new prosody, the minor and miscellaneous poems of the thirteenth century supply ample and varied **Minor** instances There is Romance-six, probably earlier than the **poems.** *Proverbs of Hendyng*, "fourteener" metre, more polished than that of the *Moral Ode*, and, best of all, the beginning, in the *Love-Rune*,[2] of the great alternately rhymed octosyllabic quatrain, the "long measure" ("common," or the split fourteener, was to be a little later) of a myriad hymns and secular pieces since This long measure is in some ways more advanced than almost anything of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, displaying equivalence,

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[1] All is man so is this erne [eagle],
  Would[e] ye now listen,
  Old in his[e] sinn[e]s derne [dark],
  Or he becometh Christen

The spelling is designedly modernised, but very slightly

[2] Maid[e] here thou mightst behold
  This world[e]s love is but o res [a race],
  And is beset so fele-vold [manifoldly],
  Fick|le and frack|le [frail] and wok | and les [weak and false].

admitting internal rhyme[1]—prophesying, through Chatterton and Blake, the Great Instauration of Coleridge, Southey, and Scott

But we must complete this group by what are perhaps its most important, though not its earliest members, the two great examples of the octosyllabic line itself in its simplest couplet form   It may almost be said that *Genesis and Exodus* (the M E not the A S paraphrase) and *The Owl and the Nightingale* are sufficient between them to teach all the main secrets of English prosody   They' are certainly sufficient to show what it is and what it is not.

We have seen how this couplet emerges in the *Brut* of Layamon, and how it there presents itself as a " transient and embarrassed " alternative to mostly broken-down and shapeless pairs of something like the old half-line   In the two poems just mentioned it is not transient, but abides , nor is it in the least embarrassed   It has quite shaken off its dilapidated companions, and abides in its own house. But that house is a house of two wings or two fronts   The one which the author of *The Owl and the Nightingale* prefers approximates in its verse-building to the French system of architecture, and is, if not rigidly uniform in syllabic arrangement (and especially patient as the metre always has been since of limitation to *seven* with a consequent hint of trochaic rhythm), yet almost rigidly iambic *or* trochaic in run   The other, of which *Genesis and Exodus* is the main occupant, admits, with the utmost freedom, that principle of trisyllabic (if not also monosyllabic) equivalence into which the old liberty of Anglo-Saxon had transformed itself under the sufficient but not tyrannical pressure of the new foot-prosody   And it presents an almost perfect specimen of the metre which Spenser (whether intentionally or not) employed in parts of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, and which Coleridge, more than 500 years later, believed himself to have invented, and explained in a very insufficient manner.

It is upon the understanding which the student attains

The Owl and the Nightingale and Genesis and Exodus

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[1] Und|er mould | they li|eth [plural] cold
And fal|loweth [groweth yellow] as | doth mead|ow grass

and upon the interpretation which he makes or accepts
of the group of pieces from the *Brut* to *Genesis and Exodus*,
which have just been discussed, that this student's whole
conception of English prosody will depend   Unfortunately,
he will not find such authorities as have delivered them-
selves on the subject by any means unanimous, more
unfortunately still, it must be said here, he will find
most of them inadequate, and not a few positively wrong
In another part of this book some account of the more
usual theories is given   It is enough to say here, that
neither the system which regards this verse as consisting
of a certain number of "stressed" syllables and a certain
or uncertain number of "unstressed," nor that which would
regard some of it as following old English, some new
French models, appears to fit the actual facts or explain
their actual consequences   To assign the "equivalenced"
varieties to a northern, the "unequivalenced" to a southern
origin, may or may not be in accordance with historical
and geographical fact, but is prosodically irrelevant   To
be content with discovering actual or possible *particular*
foreign models for each metre may not be useless (some-
thing on the subject will again be found elsewhere in this
volume), but will be inadequate, and may be misleading,
if the *general* phenomena are not examined or if their
lesson is not learnt

It should not be hard to learn for any one who will
patiently consider the facts narrated in this chapter, the
dates (as far as they are known or guessed), and the
scanned examples given in the text, the notes, and the
general survey   It will be strange if he does not perceive
that there is here something much more than a mere
regularising of accentual verse with the addition of rhyme,
something much more than a mere imitation of French
and Latin models, like the frequent attempts at English
hexameters, or those at English ballades and rondeaux
which were revived some thirty years ago, above all,
something not in the least adequately described by the
phrases "adopting the French principles of prosody,"

"following the rhythm of the foreigner," and so forth
If, as he should,[1] he possesses some knowledge of Latin
verse, classical and mediæval, some of French, a little
(the more the better) of Old English, and as much as
possible of Modern, if he will allow this knowledge to
settle and clarify his observation of this Middle English
verse of the latest twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth
century, without allowing arbitrary theories of any kind to
interfere, it seems almost impossible that he can fail to see
what was going on   The prosody of English was changing
from accent and alliteration to feet and rhyme, but it was
not following French, or the general run of mediæval Latin,
in adopting syllabic uniformity as a rule, and it was, in
a large number, if not the majority of instances, allowing
the substitution of equivalent feet (especially anapæsts for
iambs) exactly as some, but not all, classical metre had
allowed it

Another point with which the student cannot familiarise
himself too early, and one which he will find rarely or
never insisted on in works dealing with English prosody,
is that this apparent irregularity of foot arrangement brings
out the existence, the importance, and, so to speak, the
personality of the feet themselves, in a way impossible of
achievement when a uniform number of syllables is insisted
on in a line, and when "accent," "stress," or whatever the
emphasising agent be called or considered, is restricted
wholly or as much as possible to exactly corresponding
places in that line   This monotony may sometimes seem
to soothe, but in reality only deadens the susceptibility of
the ear, and that ear comes to recognise only, if not only
to demand, such coarser stimulus as that given by strong
and more or less uniform centre-pause, as the sharp snap
or clang of the concluding rhyme, and as rhetorical, not
strictly poetical, emphasis placed on special points, especi-
ally by the aid of antithesis   On the other hand, the

[1] It is sometimes asked by persons who should know better, "What
has *English* prosody to do with these mostly un-English things?"   The
answer is simple—that these un-English things went largely, and essen-
tially, to the making of English prosody

slight effort necessary to recognise the unity of the equi-
valent feet, under their diversity of substitution, demands
and begets an active sensitiveness, which very soon yields
positive, keen, and varied delight   No modern poetry can
vie with English in the possession and provision of this,
and those who neglect it deprive themselves of one of the
greatest privileges of an Englishman

But it is, of course, not contended that perfection in so
difficult and exquisite an accomplishment was, or could
have been, attained at once   The prosody, like the
language, had to " make itself," to " grow, ' and, even more
than the language, it had not merely to grow like a
vegetable, but to make itself by animated, if often un-
conscious, efforts   Had things been otherwise it would
have been far less interesting   As it is, there is not one
of the imperfect efforts which have been briefly reviewed
here that is not a "document in the case," a step in the
progress, a fresh attempt of the bird to chip the shell and
get clear of the fragments.

The later
thirteenth
century
and the
fourteenthThese documents, speaking approximately, have brought
us to, and perhaps a little beyond, the middle of the thir-
teenth century   Philologists and palæographers do not give
us much as dating from the latter part of that century, or
at least from the third quarter of it   But towards the
close, and onwards to the supposed birth date of Chaucer
(1340), we have an ever-increasing mass of interesting
material continuing the demonstration just given   At an
uncertain period (not impossibly close to that birth itself)
we find also a new phenomenon of a general kind and of
first-rate importance , and in the last half or, say, the last
third of the century we come, not only to Chaucer himself,
but to two other poets, lesser than himself as masters of
form, but by no means small in that respect, and contrasted
with him in it after a really marvellous fashion.

We can give less individual attention to the first-
named group of documents , but as a matter of fact they
require less, and sub-group themselves   At the close of
the thirteenth century we have a body of verse, the

whole of it sometimes ascribed by guess-work, part of it ascribed with certainty, and yet more not without prob- ability, to Robert of Gloucester   This work, consisting of a *Chronicle* and of many *Saints' Lives*, is entirely written in fourteener (or, when there is a final *e*, fifteener) couplets of the same general stamp as those which we have seen in the *Moral Poem*, but differentiated from those of the *Ormulum* by the admission of equivalence   They are, however, much more advanced than even the latest version of the *Poema Morale*, and the writer, or writers, can make them into a capital narrative vehicle, distinctly indicating, if not freely expressing, the further resolution into the ballad metre of eight and six

But this craving for narrative in verse did not confine itself to a single vehicle, indeed, in probably a very great majority of instances, it preferred another, or two others, with which we are also acquainted, and further varieties still which we have not yet seen, but which show, unmistakably, the advance in prosodic aptitude   The great body of narrative verse, known as "the Romances," begins to date from the end of the thirteenth century — a few, such as *Havelok* and *Horn*, are certainly earlier than the fourteenth, by the end of the first third, if not of the first quarter, of this latter, a very large number were as certainly in existence

Now probably the whole of these Romances were more or less directly imitated from French originals, nearly all of which we actually possess, but it is extremely remark- able that they by no means always followed the metre of those originals, and that when they did they took consider- able liberties with it   That metre was almost invariably Alexandrine or decasyllabic, in long batches not couplets, or octosyllabic in couplet   Of the two probably oldest of ours, *Havelok* and *Horn*, the first does attempt this octosyllabic couplet, but treats it in a very rough and independent fashion, something in the *Genesis and Exodus* line, while *King Horn* seems to favour some- thing like what we observe in part of the English *Bestiary*

and the whole of the French one—a split Alexandrine or six-syllabled couplet   Very soon the *rime couée* or Romance-six (which had not been a staple romance-metre in French) appears, and occasionally more elaborate stanzas still, such as the complicated arrangement of *Sir Tristrem*   Those writers who prefer couplet improve upon *Horn* and *Havelok*, but they follow *Genesis and Exodus* much more than *The Owl and the Nightingale*

Indeed, some of them develop this couplet in a manner possessing almost infinite "future"   They not merely follow the writer of *Genesis and Exodus* in substituting trisyllabic, if not also monosyllabic, feet for dissyllabic to the number of *four*, but some of them develop hints, which may be found in that composition, by extending the actual foot-length of the line to *five*, and sometimes repeating this in an actual "heroic" pair   Whether this was in some, or even at first in all, cases accidental, does not really matter   The decasyllable or five-foot line was already existent in great masses of French poetry, though not in single couplets, it was natural that, occasionally, more room should be wanted than the octosyllable provides, and there is the undoubted fact that, in more than one other European language, ten, or according to the structure of the particular tongue, eleven syllables were suggesting themselves as the most convenient size   The fourteener was so long as to invite breaking up quite early, the Alexandrine has never naturalised itself for continuous use in English, and the octosyllable, though its early appearance, the wealth of models for it, and its ease, fostered and sustained it, had the already mentioned drawback of lack of *content*   It was certain that, in a language which was showing itself so fortunately free from hide-bound qualities, the decasyllable would establish itself   It has been usual to say that, in couplet at any rate, Chaucer "took it from the French"   As a matter of actual practice he may have done so, but in the order of nature and thought it was not in the least necessary for him to do it   Indeed, it would be almost

literally true[1] to say that English had decasyllabic couplet before French—that it was an English invention

For the time, however, the octosyllable was the staple Lyrics for narrative, varied to no mean extent by the stanzas already described; while these stanzas, often of the most elaborate and complicated descriptions, were adopted from French (and perhaps Provençal) or extemporised by the taste and fancy of the writers   One famous collection[2] indicates the school of which our poets were scholars by alternating French poems with English   But this very collection shows amply that these same writers refused to undergo the syllabic constraints of French, and held to what were to be always the real, if frequently the unrecognised and sometimes the denied, principles of the New English in verse—that is to say, the constitution of the line by feet, *not* syllables—and the consequent possibility of obtaining equivalent lines by the substitution of feet, varying in syllabic constituence, but interchangeable in metrical value   Some examples of all these things will be found in the Scanned Conspectus, the student should search the books named in the notes for more, which he will find in the fullest abundance   What is important is that by this study he may and should discover the real and too commonly misunderstood relation of Chaucer to precedent English verse

There is, however, another fact of the fourteenth century which it is not less important for him to recognise, and which also has been too often misunderstood, or at least not put in its proper place   This is the revival of alliterative-accentual verse

As there are few things, in treating prosody, of greater The weight than to keep carefully before the student the dif alliterative revival ference between controversial and uncontroversial points, it should be said at once that "revival" is not quite one of the latter   There have been some who have taken it

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[1] The poem commonly reputed as the oldest in French, *St Eulalia*, is in something very like it, but was not followed up

[2] MS Harl 2253   Published by Thomas Wright for the Percy Society (London, 1847) as *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*

for granted that the alliterative-accentual form *never* ceased
out of the land   It may be so, there is even a sort of
antecedent plausibility about the notion   But the im-
portant historical fact is that no such verse apparently
exists of a probable date between about 1250 (the later
form of Layamon itself, much further encroached upon by
metre and rhyme) and about 1350   Somewhere about
this latter time it does reappear, and before very long
has its chief pure representative in Langland, at the same
time as metre has *its* chief pure representative in Chaucer

But this reappearance is conditioned and qualified by
a very remarkable fact   There is, as has just been said,
pure alliterative verse.   It is not, indeed, an exact repre-
sentation of the old A S line   It is somewhat longer
than the shorter forms of that line, and very much shorter
than the "extended" variety   In some cases, especially
in the later examples, the alliteration is richer, extending
to four, five, or even six syllables   Most noteworthy of
all is the substitution, in the general rhythmical run, of
anapæstic-iambic for trochaic basis—a fact the importance
of which, in the general history of the morphology of
English poetry and of the change from A S to M E,
cannot be exaggerated

But it is also worthy of the most careful remark that,
in a relatively large number of instances, the alliterative-
accentual system is apparently unable to rely upon itself
It is tempted or driven to borrow metre, or rhyme, or
both   Of the two best pieces in the alliterative division,
outside *Piers Plowman*, *Gawain and the Green Knight*
combines, with an unrhymed body or *tirade*, a rhymed
"bob and wheel" in every stanza, while *The Pearl*,
though alliterated almost to the highest possible strength,
is strictly metrical and strictly rhymed throughout   Others
form their stanzas of lines roughly rhythmed but fairly
well rhymed

The later
fourteenth
century

By the last quarter of the fourteenth century, therefore,
there were in England two contrasted and in a way rival,
but, as has been said, overlapping, systems of versification .

one a sort of atavistic revival, the other the result of a process—*two* centuries old to a certainty, and probably nearer *four*—of blending the characteristics of Low Latin and French prosody with those of Old English

In the three chief poets of the later fourteenth century (Chaucer, Gower, and Langland) we have three object lessons as to the results of this process, which could not have been improved if the course of events had been exclusively devoted to the task of making these results, and the process itself, clear to the student They had best be taken in reverse order

Langland represents, in the greatest perfection that can reasonably be expected, the attempt to preserve, or revert to, verse arranged without rhyme, without metre in the strict sense, and depending for its separation from prose upon alliteration, accent, and strong middle pause In spite of himself, and in consequence of the state of the language, actually metrical lines — decasyllables, Alexandrines, and fourteeners—do appear, but, as a rule, he avoids them either with singular skill or with remarkable luck, and on the whole achieves a consistent medium, not so much dominated as permeated by a sort of anapæstic underhum of rhythm, but otherwise maintaining its independence Being possessed of great literary and even distinctly poetical genius, he makes it a by no means unsuitable vehicle for his tangle of apocalyptic dreams, and no ill one for the occasional passages of a more mundane description which he interlards But it is deficient in beauty, if not in vigour, it is clearly unsuited for many of the subjects of poetry, and to any one acquainted with metre and rhyme it constantly suggests the question and complaint, " *Why* are we to be deprived of these already-won beauties and conveniences, and cut off with this rough makeshift ? "

As Langland represents the purely accentual division or phase of English prosody at this time, so does Gower represent the almost purely syllabic He uses, with insignificant exceptions,[1] the old octosyllabic couplet, but he

[1] The rhyme royal decasyllables of the " Supplication," or " Letter to

Langland

Gower

comes closer than any other English writer of the Middle
English period to the strict French model   He does not,
like his forerunners, and like even Chaucer, allow himself
the seven-syllable line as a variation , and though he does,
by the admission of those who are opposed to the system
of this book, occasionally admit an " extrametrical syl-
lable," and, according to that system, much oftener a
trisyllabic foot, this interferes little with the general uni-
formity of his verse-run   Almost the only variations that
he relies upon are frequent initial trochees an occasional
balanced arrangement of the halves of the line—

> The cloth was laid, the board was set—

contrasted with less strongly marked pauses, and especi-
ally a device whereby a full stop comes at the first line of
two couplets separated by another, so that a sort of *In
Memoriam* quatrain effect, with first and last lines blank, is
obtained, as thus

> Hew down this tree and let it fall,
> The leaves let defoul in haste,
> And do the fruit destroy and waste,
> And let offshredden every branch

To this the present writer would add distinct trisyllabic
feet where others see slur, as in—

> The weath|er was mer|ry and fair | enough

The result, especially with syncopation of these trisyl-
lables, is what some call "pre-eminent smoothness" of metre,
others dominant monotony   The metre had proved itself
of old well suited for actual narrative, and, as Gower can
tell a story, when he has a good one to tell, the effect, as
in the passages about Nebuchadnezzar, Medea, Ceyx and
Alcyone, Rosiphelè, the "Trump of Death," and other
persons and things, is quite excellent   But in the didactic
and conversational parts it is often terribly tedious and
lamentably limp

Venus and Cupid," at the close of the *Confessio*, and of the poem " In
Praise of Peace "

Thus Langland, from yet another point of view, repre- Chaucer
sents the rejection of the new English prosody altogether
or as far as possible, and Gower, the timid imitation of
French   Chaucer, on the other hand, despite his un-
doubted attention to French and Italian models, is in
the direct line which we have been tracing, and represents,
if not completely, yet to a very large extent, at once the
development and the perfecting of the processes which
we have described   It has indeed been urged by some
that Chaucer probably knew nothing, or very little, of
English poetry before his own day   But while, on the
one hand, this is quite unproven, and not a little improb-
able, those who urge it do not seem to see that, even if
it were so, it is comparatively irrelevant   It is not in
the least necessary to suppose that Chaucer must have
borrowed the Vernon MS or another like it, carried it
home to the rooms above Aldgate, "stirred the fire and
taken a drink" as Henryson did later with his own
Troilus, and then, after discussing to himself principles
of versification, have decided that this was to be followed,
that to be avoided, that again to be perfected and carried
further   The main and undoubted facts remain that
Chaucer was an Englishman of 1340(?)-1400, that he
was the greatest Englishman of letters of his time, that
he spoke and wrote the English language, and that thus,
by what he would himself have called "the law of kind,"
he entered into the inheritance of all that had been done
in this English matter by Englishmen for generations
beforehand   As a matter of fact, there is plenty of
evidence destructive of the contention referred to   He
had read the Romances, or he could not have written *Sir
Thopas,* he knew the alliterative poems, or he could not
have made the famous reference to *rum ram ruf* in the
Prologue to the *Parson's Tale,* which Gascoigne caught up
It is odd if he had not heard (even if he had not read)
the plays that folk like his own Absolon played "upon a
scaffold high"   But, as has been said, it does not matter
    For his work is there, and it is incontestably—whatever

His perfect-
ing of M E
verse

its author had read or not read—the logical and biological
continuation and perfecting of all that had gone before
from Godric and the *Paternoster*   He begins with the
fluent octosyllable and the melodious and usefully
stringent rhyme-royal, as well as other more or less
elaborate stanzas   He communicates to the couplet[1] a
greater combination of order and variety than it had
ever known in English , he makes of the stanza,[2] in the
case of rhyme-royal, the most perfect formal arrangement
of verse that English had yet seen   Later he takes up,[3]
very probably because he had written so many separate
examples of it in rhyme-royal itself at the close of
each stanza, the *decasyllabic* couplet, and makes of that
something greater still—a metrical instrument or vehicle
escaping at once the scanty content and slightly insignifi-
cant bearing of the octosyllable, the elaborateness and rather
melancholy quality of rhyme-royal   In doing this it is
inevitable that, as Spenser did in parallel case afterwards,
he should lean rather towards precision than towards great
laxity and luxuriance of form , for things needed order
But he sets the example of that variation of pause in
rhyme-royal which was fortunately taken as a rule, and
which preserved for English one of the very greatest
means of metrical achievement   In the octosyllable
he reproduced knowingly, and with definite apology,
that "failing of a syllable" which gives acephalous or
trochaic alternation, and which all the greatest masters
of the metre, except (following Gower) William Morris,
have imitated   And he broke up the lines very largely
by conversation-fragments, by putting full stops at the
end of the first line of a couplet, and by making a whole
paragraph end at the same place

But next to his provision of a perfectly finished stanza—
in other words, of a complete, and *pro tanto* final, prosodic

[1] In the disputed *Romance of the Rose*, and the undisputed *Death of
Blanche*, and the somewhat later *House of Fame*

[2] The *Parliament of Fowls*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, etc

[3] First in the *Legend of Good Women* and then in the *Canterbury
Tales*

result — in rhyme-royal, the most important thing done
by Chaucer in this department was the arranging and
setting on foot of the decasyllabic couplet, which he began
well in the *Legend of Good Women*, but carried on much
better in the *Canterbury Tales*   Not half of his actual
achievement here, and a very much smaller part of his
promise and stimulus for the future, can be perceived by
those who limit him to the decasyllable as such by devices
of elision and syncope, still less by those who would
have his varieties of line exactly to represent variations
of the French decasyllable   The former proceeding is
inadequate and defacing, the latter practically impossible,
except as a bare and barren matter of arithmetic   You
cannot imitate the prosodic effect of one language in
another, even though you take the exact number of
syllables and (as far as you can) divide the words, arrange
the accents, etc, with the most slavish copying   The
result will laugh at you prosodically, and while it is
very unlikely to give you anything similar, it is nearly
certain to give you something quite different [1]

When Chaucer's verse in "heroic" or "riding rhyme"
is examined, simply on its own merits and without regard to
arbitrary theories of pronunciation, but with all necessary
remembrance of the value of the final *e*, etc, it is seen to
follow, in every respect, the general principles which we
have seen evolving themselves in all English poetry
hitherto, subject only to the general reforming or
regimenting tendency which has been noticed   The
normal line is beyond all question five-foot iambic, or
decasyllabic with short and long syllable alternately
But there are a few instances [2] of so-called acephalous
lines where the first syllable seems to have been missed—
where, at any rate, there are only nine to account for,

[1] These words are written, not merely on general principles, but from <
long and extensive knowledge of French fourteenth-century poetry
[2] Such as the well-known

Twen|ty bok|ès clad | in black | or red
of the Oxford clerk

and where you consequently have to choose between a monosyllabic foot in the first place or trochaic cadence throughout   There is little doubt in the mind of the present writer that if these lines (which, after all, are very few) were deliberately written and meant to be kept, the reason of their existence was a false analogy with the octosyllable, where, as we have said, such acephalous lines, trochaic and heptasyllabic, do occur, and where they produce not only no ill, but a positively good effect   Unluckily the cutting down does *not* produce a good effect in the larger couplet , and if trochaic rhythm is permitted—in other words, if the missing syllable is shifted from the beginning to the end—it produces a very bad one   But they are, as has been said, in very small proportion, though there are too many of them to be simply "mended" out of existence

Proceeding, we find, in a far larger number of instances, not a defect but an excess of syllables   As far as these syllables are found at the end of the line (in great measure caused by the final *e*) there is no difficulty and no dispute about them   They are allowed by everybody, and they come under that general law of almost (not quite) all prosodies which makes the final place of a line one of liberty   But it is different with those which come *within* the line, and with apparent extensions beyond the eleventh syllable   Many, perhaps most, prosodists would shut their eyes to the latter, regarding them as mere extra-redundances, and explain away those which occur within the line by elision before a vowel, by syncope or crasis or the like (see Glossary) when they come before a consonant

To the present writer these devices and shifts appear unnecessary, discordant, the reverse of natural, and alike the consequence and the cause of prosodic error   With regard to *hiatus* (*i e* the actual contact of vowels) it has to be fully admitted that there is a strong tendency in MSS to sink one of them and to write not merely "tharray" for "the array," but even "in thalyghte" for "in thee alyghte"   The habit continued for a long time, and we

find even in Wyatt and Surrey "tembrace" for "to embrace" and so forth   But it is important to observe first that this habit is not constant, as we should expect it to be if it represented a definite and reasoned wish always to reduce two such syllables to one, and further, that it will not affect the other cases of syllables, such as the last of "Heaven" (which, however, pretty certainly *was* monosyllabic at this time and later), "ever," the *-eth* of the third person singular and plural, *y* in "many a," *i-* in scores of words, and the like

To the present writer, once more, it is certain, and even indisputable, that whether Chaucer deliberately used trisyllabic feet or not, there are trisyllabic feet by nature and poetic right in Chaucer, for any one who chooses them. And he is of opinion, though not so strongly, that Chaucer allowed himself an occasional Alexandrine or twelve-syllabled line,[1] just as preceding writers had allowed themselves occasional ten-syllabled lines in octosyllabics What is once more certain, and almost indisputable, is that his lines can be so scanned with euphonious effect, and that similar phenomena manifest themselves all the way up to his time

Of his rhymes nothing necessarily need be said here. He often avails himself for rhyme, as well as for rhythm, of the choice between Teutonic and Romance accent— the former always seeking the beginning of the word, the latter generally the end   This was hardly even a licence at his period

One much-vexed point it is, however, impossible to omit, though far more, in every sense, has been made of it than it is worth   It occurred many years ago to a distinguished scholar, the late Mr Bradshaw of Cambridge, to make a

[1] Westward | right swich, | ano|ther in | the op|posite
                        (*Knight's Tale,* 1036)

And said, | O deer |e housbond |e, *be|nedi|citee* ¹
                        (*Wife of Bath s Tale,* 231)

Doth so | his ce|rimo|nies and | obei|saunces,
And ke|peth in | semblant | all his | obser|vaunces
    •   (*Squire's Tale,* 515, 516)

test out of the rhyme of *y* and *ye*, which, he thought (despite a famous example in *Sir Thopas* [1]), never occurs in the work unquestionably Chaucer's   To the present writer the occurrence of the rhyme in *Sir Thopas* closes the question, and he would have much to say against the establishment of the test, even if *Sir Thopas* were acknowledged as not Chaucerian   But from the strict point of view of this book the whole thing is really irrelevant It does not matter to us *who* wrote certain pieces of English poetry, but what the characteristics of those and other pieces of English poetry are   The student of prosody may and should note that in some pieces of this period the rhyme of *y* and *ye* certainly does occur, that in others it apparently does not , but beyond this he need not, and, as a student of prosody, should not, go

[1] "Sir Guy," which cannot have an *e*, and "chivalrye," which must have one

CHAPTER II

It might be supposed, especially in face of the unquestion- Causes of
able reputation which Chaucer had attained before his decay in
death—and which he maintained undisturbed, and hardly English
approached, for the entire period until Spenser's birth,— prosody
that his prosodic work, once done, would have been done
once for all, that in points of form, though individual
inferiority of poetic gift might show itself, there could be
no great technical falling off To think this, however,
would be to ignore—as, in fact, men too usually do ignore,
and have ignored—the necessary and intricate connection
between language and prosody Chaucer had raised the
state of English versification to the highest point possible
in his time, in fact, there are reasons for saying that he
had screwed it up beyond the level possible to ordinary
men To mention nothing else, the exactness, and at the
same time the rhythmical variety of his verse, depend on
two special points—the valuing of the final *e* and the optional
but carefully selected shift from French to English ac-
centuation [1] We know that, even in the mouths and on
the pens of his own contemporaries, the *e* was breaking
down, and that it "went" more and more during the
fifteenth century, and we know likewise, though less
certainly, that though, even at the close of the period with

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[1] These are certain and incontestable The present writer would add
the sprinkling of trisyllabic feet, Alexandrines, etc —even more difficult for
clumsy followers to imitate successfully

which we are dealing, French accentuation was still per-
missible to poets, an English standard was gradually
establishing itself, violation of which was disapproved [1]
Moreover, the fact remains undeniable that the poetic
quality of the followers of Chaucer, in Southern English of
the literary kind, was low to a point unprecedented, and
never yet again reached since.

The progress of prosody between Chaucer and Spenser
divides itself, sharply but unequally in point of time, between
a longer space (about a century and a quarter) from
Chaucer to poets like Hawes, Skelton, and Barclay, a
shorter (of about half a century or less) from Wyatt to
Spenser   In the first division a subdivision—of matter,
not time—has to be made between the literary poets in
Southern English, the Scottish Chaucerians from James
the First to Douglas or Lyndsay (if not even to Mont-
gomerie, who died later than Spenser himself), and the
ballad, carol, and other folk-song writers of the fifteenth
century

The history of the first division is the history of the
breakdown just referred to   Except in the so-called
Chauceriana—pieces such as " The Cuckoo and the Night-
ingale," " The Flower and the Leaf," " The Court of Love,"
etc, once attributed to Chaucer himself, but cast out on
various kinds of evidence ranging from practically con-
clusive to very doubtful—and sometimes even in such
poets as Lydgate and Occleve, who for no very small
portion of their lives were Chaucer's own contemporaries,
downwards, seem to be struck with metrical palsy or
metrical blindness   Examples, given in the Scanned Con-
spectus above, will show the way in which they confuse
different metres, vary the lengths of their lines not by
intentional substitution but by sheer muddlement, violate
rhythm and cadence—turn, in fact, the perfect harmony
of their master into a cacophony which is not even prosaic.
Sometimes, especially in Occleve, by rigid counting of
syllables, they escape worse blunders, though they seldom

Lydgate,
Occleve, etc

[1] As by Gascoigne (*v   inf*).

make real music   Generally, even this resource fails them,
and there is no worse chaos than in Hawes, one of the
latest and not one of the least of them , while Skelton,
perhaps the acutest intelligence of all, takes refuge in frank,
not clumsy, and intentional doggerel

To this spectacle of disorganisation and decay the
Scottish followers of Chaucer (who, generally with acknow-
ledgment as eager and hearty as that of their English
comrades, take him for their master) present what may
at first sight seem an astonishing and almost unintelligible
contrast   With final *e*'s allowed for (or in case of necessity
touched in), the *Kingis Quair*, traditionally ascribed, and
never with solid reason denied, to James the First, is a
piece of rhyme-royal as soundly constructed, and as well
fitted and polished, as if it were Chaucer's own   Henryson,
in his following of Chaucer's *Troilus*, and in his other
poems, never breaks down in metre, but handles every
form that he touches with equal precision and charm
Even more may be said of Dunbar, whose lyrics possess
the peculiar grace only given by metrical accomplishment,
who can manage alliterative metre more smoothly than
Langland and with not less vigour, and who, if he wrote
the "Friars of Berwick," is, next to Chaucer himself, the
greatest master of the early (Middle English) heroic couplet
Of the verse-chroniclers, Wyntoun, though not very poetical,
uses octosyllabic couplet, with not infrequent equivalence,
effectively enough, and Blind Harry writes very strict
decasyllabic couplet with cæsura at the fourth syllable, after
the French model   The earlier sixteenth-century writers,
Douglas and Lyndsay, if not perhaps quite impeccable,
appear so beside Hawes and his fellows , while the
two latest strictly Scots poets, Scott and Montgomerie,
manage most complicated measures—reminding us of
early French and Provençal, or of those of the English
fourteenth century in lyric and drama—with unerring
accuracy and finished grace   Of this strange contrast the
simple fact of writing in a different dialect, requiring
more care in imitation, may supply some explanation , the

other fact, that this dialect was rather a literary conven-
tion than a vernacular speech, some more , and the higher
quality of individual genius, more still , but a margin of
surprise remains

Ballad, etc.   It is difficult to say whether that margin is reduced or
widened by the fact that a contrast, almost as striking, is
found between the English literary poetry of the period
and the " folk-song," sacred and profane   It is probable
that the bulk of our older ballads date from the earliest
fifteenth century or the very close of the fourteenth   The
latter would seem to be true of the "Robin Hood " ballads ,
the former is pretty certainly true of " Chevy Chase "   We
have also from the fifteenth century a large body of carols,
or sacred poems for singing

Now in these, though they naturally vary much in poetic
merit and in prosodic accomplishment, it is remarkable
that this latter scarcely ever falls to the level of the worst
literary poetry, and never falls in exactly the same way
The ballad-writers invariably, and the carol- and hymn-
writers very commonly, preserve the English licence of
equivalence in the fullest fashion , and this seems to
relieve their motion of the staggering and fatal cramp
which rests on their superiors in formal literary rank
They sing naturally   they do not aim at, and break down
in, a falsetto   Although it would be impossible to have
anything in a worse condition, as far as copying goes,
than our oldest version of " Chevy Chase," its natural
ballad motion carries it safe through all the corruptions
and defacements , the sacred song of "E I O " is admirable
metre , the Carol of the Virgin, "I sing of a maiden," is
matchless in quiet metrical movement , and the famous
" Nut-brown Maid," which is certainly not later than this
century, deserves the same praise in more rapid melody

These compositions, however, though they did a precious
office in preserving the true principles of English prosody,
could not exercise immediate influence , and the dis-
organising of literary versification was no doubt partly
cause and partly consequence of the continuance of the

alliterative revolt which did not die till after Flodden—
indeed, not till after Musselburgh (Pinkie)   But, indirectly,
this revolt encouraged fresh developments of English metre
itself   The old fourteener had taken new and lively form
in such pieces as *Gamelyn* [1] (late fourteenth century) and
Beryn (middle fifteenth), and through it and other things
—the musical adaptations of songs and hymns and the
like—there was arising, in dramatic literature especially,
a disorderly, imperfect, but very important notion of
wholly " triple timed " or anapæstic metre   In fact, it is
not excessive to regard the English fifteenth century as a
period when all elements of prosody were thrown into a
sort of cauldron, sack, sieve, or lucky-bag, in which, as
according to the different metaphors suiting these objects,
they were to be boiled down, shaken together, sifted out,
and taken as fortune would have it, to supply the stock
of a new venture in more orderly and polished verse-manu-
facture when actual speech had settled itself once more

At what period, in what manner, and by what persons
exactly, conscious discontent with this confusion and
dilapidation was made manifest, is not known   That it

<div style="margin-left:2em; font-size:smaller;">

Dissatisfac-
tion and
reform.

[1] Litheth and lesteneth   and herkeneth aright,
  And ye schulle here a talking   of a doughty knight ,
  Sire Johan of Boundys   was his righte name,
  He cowde of norture enough   and mochil of game
  Thre sones the knight hadde   that with his body he wan ,
  The eldest was a moche shrewe   and sone he bigan
  His bretheren loved wel here fader   and of him were agast,
  The eldest deserved his father's curse   and had it at the last
  The goode knight his fader   livede so vore
  I hat deth was comen him to and handled him full sore
  The goode knight cared sore   syk ther he lay,
  How his children scholde   liven after his day
  He hadde ben wyde-wher   but no housband he was,
  Al the lond that he hadde   it was verrey purchas
  Fayn he wolde it were   dressed among hem alle,
  That ech of hem hadde his part · as it might falle
                                  (*Gamelyn,* 1-16)

(Here l 8, with the almost certain *crasis* of "theldest," is a pure
iambic fourteener   Elsewhere there are monosyllabic beginnings, con-
tractions of whole or half feet, and great apparent " irregularity," but at the
same time nearer and nearer approach to the anapæstic dimeter, which
was to become so popular)

</div>

was felt consciously about the middle of the sixteenth century we do know positively from a passage in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, and later still we find the precepts of Gascoigne virtually, if not always expressly, directed against it   But, as has been hinted, even Skeltonic evinces an earlier attempt to escape from it in practice as far back as the first quarter of the century, while, at an uncertain time for first efforts, during the second, and then ever increasingly during the third, till the death of Gascoigne himself, poetical practice proclaims the fact, even more emphatically than any preceptist rules of criticism could do   Indeed, there has hardly ever been any mistake, and it is difficult to think that by persons possessed of ears and eyes any could be made, about the surprising revolution manifest in the verse of Sir Thomas Wyatt, and of his younger disciple, Henry Howard, known by his courtesy title as the Earl of Surrey   Instead of the weltering and staggering discords of the poets from Lydgate onward, we come back to verse almost as clear, regular, and harmonious as Chaucer's, though with a much more modern pronunciation and accent, to which it occasionally seems to have some difficulty in reconciling itself   The final *e* has in most cases disappeared, though it is probably there in a few cases, and in a few others has settled itself into *y*.[1]   The inordinate variety of syllables in the line, not explicable by any trisyllabic foot, is reformed   Indeed, the need of the reform is so strongly felt that the poets run into the opposite error—salutary for the time—of excessive syllabic uniformity

Wyatt and
Surrey
There can be no question that Wyatt, and, through or after him, Surrey, were enormously helped, if not originally stimulated to reform, by the existence of new, exact, and attractive foreign models derived, at any rate originally, from a new language   French had hitherto been almost the only source of such models, and it had lost its virtue—

[1] *I e* forms like "hugy" (Sackville), "bleaky" (Dryden), and "paly" (Coleridge)   These forms somehow identified themselves with the artificial poetic diction of the eighteenth century, and have, since the early part of the nineteenth, been rather eschewed by poets

not least perhaps because *ballades* and other formal devices, though excellent in themselves, had been practised all through the period of disorganisation   Italian supplied, in the sonnet, *terza rima*, and blank verse, fresh models, in the attempt to imitate which precision of syllabic and rhythmical arrangement almost inevitably enjoined itself To write either sonnet or *terza* in shuffling doggerel would destroy the particular form , to write blank verse in such a way (as was actually shown a hundred years afterward by the later " Elizabethan " dramatists) is to lose *all* form , so that the instinct of preservation kept the new experimenters right   Precisely why they adopted another form which is not Italian at all — the poulter's measure of alternate Alexandrine and fourteener— is not so easy to decide , but it may very reasonably be taken to be an attempt to regularise two of the shapes to which the doggerel of the time and its predecessor most nearly approximated   It is not a very good form (though when it splits up into " short measure " it has some merits), and even in the hands of two such poets as Wyatt and Surrey it is terribly sing-song   But this very sing-song carried regularity with it   Of the imported measures *terza* has never suited English very well, though numerous attempts have been made at it by poets sometimes of supreme quality   On the other hand, the sonnet — not the commonest Italian form at first, but that also later— has made itself thoroughly at home , and blank verse— not much more of a success in Italian itself than *terza* in English—has, in English, grown to be one of the greatest metres in the world's prosodic history

It should be at once seen that these processes of reform involved an almost inevitable—a certainly very natural—" drawing-in of the horns " of verse, which was positively beneficial in practice, but which led to rather disastrous mistakes in theory   On the one hand, so far as Italian admits of foot-distribution, it is distributable only into dissyllabic feet in the metres affected [1]   On the other,

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[1] Or, rather, as any one may see from different editions of Dante,

the utter disorganisation of English verse which had pre-
vailed might well seem to have been caused by the neglect
to observe accurate division into such feet—a division
which, in our language, will always chiefly favour the
iamb, or foot with the first syllable short and the second
long   Accordingly we find that in Wyatt and Surrey
themselves, in their companions when (long after the
death of the first, and nearly a decade after that of the
second) their work came to be published in *Tottel's
Miscellany*, in the huge rubbish-heap of the *Mirror for
Magistrates* with its one pearl of price in Sackville's
contributions, and in the poets of the third quarter of
the sixteenth century—George Turberville and Gascoigne
himself—this iambic rhythm is omnipresent, though the
line-length and other combinations may be largely variable
There is, it is true, one remarkable exception in the
Georgic poet Tusser, who uses frequent and accurate
anapæst, but the nature of his subject, the homeliness
of his diction, and the character of his intended readers,
may have been thought to put him out of strictly poetical
consideration   When Gascoigne—merely as narrating and
regretting a fact, *not* announcing, as some have erroneously
thought, a principle—stated the limitation, his fact was
for the most part a fact, and had been so for more than
a generation

Their
followers
It would, however, be a gross mistake in criticism, as
well as a piece of unpardonable ingratitude, to find fault
with these poets for their prosodic limitation   It was
their business to limit and be limited—to substitute, at
whatever cost of temporary restriction of freedom, order
for the abominable disorder of the preceding century,
rhythm for its limping or staggering movement, harmonious
and well-concerted metrical arrangement for its hubbub of
halting verse or scarcely more than even half-doggerelised
prose   And they did this   When, as in the cases of Wyatt,
Surrey, and Sackville, they were men of real and genuine

the trisyllables which do occur are almost always capable[4] of being
" slurred up "

poetic gift they did much more, though the two first
were still hampered by the uncertainty of pronunciation
From this Sackville is comparatively free, though the
deliberate archaism in him no doubt assists this freedom,
and may have suggested something similar to Spenser.
Even Turberville and Gascoigne, though their strictly poetic
powers are less, manage to produce, by no means seldom,
sweet and harmonious measures   And all do the inestim-
able work of drilling, regimenting, and preparing the raw
and demoralised state of English prosody so that it may
be ready to the hands of a real master and commander

Such a master and commander duly presented himself Spenser
in Spenser   Naturally enough—and even commendably
enough on the principle of proving all things and holding
fast that which is good—he spent a little time on classical
"versing", only to give it up so completely that (as is
not the case with his friend Sidney) no single example of
it, or of any approach to it, occurs in his actual poetical
works   He must have spent much more on experiments
in English verse proper, before the ever-famous and
admirable *Shepherd's Calendar* appeared in the winter of
1579-80

For poetical excellence, combined with prosodic regu- The
larity, there had been nothing like this since Chaucer, for *Shepherd's*
poetical excellence combined with prosodic variety it may *Calendar*
be questioned whether Chaucer himself—his whole work
being set against this novice's essay—can show anything
equal   Spenser had not yet ventured to publish (though
it is more than probable that he had sketched it out [1]) his
immortal stanza, and he did not issue till later any exact
and complete followings of Chaucer's riding rhyme   But
he uses (the exact order is for special reasons not followed)
a very fine six-line stanza (decasyllables rhymed *ababcc*),
slightly altered Romance-six with fresh substitution and
redundance in the short lines, various stanzas much
"cuttit and broken" (*i e* of very varied line-length and
rhyme-order), the Chaucerian octave, common ballad

[1] The scheme of the *Faerie Queene* was sent to Harvey soon afterwards

measure, and another metre, much discussed and not universally agreed upon, but, on the more probable interpretation of it, one of the most interesting in the whole history of English poetry

This arrangement, which is found in the "February," "May," and "September" pieces, but most characteristically in the part of "February" devoted to the tale of "The Oak and the Brere" (Briar), has been thought by some to be evidence that Spenser misunderstood Chaucer's "riding rhyme" owing to the disuse of the final valued *e* and other changes, these pieces presenting the result of the misconception   Unfortunately for this notion, the pieces themselves contain large numbers of consecutive decasyllabics perfectly well filled and rhythmed, while Spenser later wrote another piece, *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, which is in impeccable "riding rhyme" from first to last He is also, not merely in his later work, but in the other nine-twelfths of the *Calendar* itself, an equally impeccable master of every rhythm and metre that he tries, so that it is practically inconceivable that he should here have been stumbling blindfold, or wandering aimlessly, between perfect decasyllabic couplets, perfect octosyllabic couplets, and doggerel anapæstic lines inconsistent with both   On the other hand, there had been in English, as we have seen, from *Genesis and Exodus* downwards, a variety of octosyllabic couplet which had admitted anapæstic equivalence freely, which reappeared in the Romances, and which, though not favoured by Chaucer or Gower or their immediate followers, had persevered in various places down to Spenser's own time   It seems to the present writer, as it did to Gray a hundred and fifty years ago, and has to many others since *Christabel*, though Coleridge himself strangely did not notice it, that Spenser here followed his elders, and anticipated Coleridge himself, in choosing equivalenced octosyllable to vary his non equivalenced decasyllable   And on this theory we have in *Genesis and Exodus*, the *Shepherd's Calendar*, and *Christabel*, the three main piers of a great bridge which unites the earliest and the latest ages of

English prosody, and which carries that prosody's most
vital and differential principle

The result, however, of Spenser's experiments was that, *The Faerie
Queene*
for his chief poem the *Faerie Queene*, he chose none of the
metres in which he had thus experimented, nor any which
had been previously employed by poets, English or other,
but invented (the possible stages of the invention being
given elsewhere) the magnificent Spenserian stanza of
eight decasyllables and an Alexandrine   With this he
got more room than in either rhyme-royal or the octave
—an unsurpassed medium for the individual descriptive
effects in which he delighted, and yet one which could'
combine itself (for the purpose of larger description or of
narrative) into most attractive sequence   He did not,
however, confine himself to this in his later poems, but
showed himself a master, not merely of the octave in both
its forms and of the couplet, but also of two extensive verse
combinations more elaborate than the Spenserian itself, but
less original, and both really suggested, as the Spenserian
was *not*, by Italian   The first was the sonnet, which, after
the successors of Wyatt and Surrey had been apparently
afraid to venture on it, had been taken up by Sidney and
Watson probably about the same time that he was himself
at work upon his *Calendar*, and in which he did very
beautiful things   The other was the still more extensive
and complicated arrangement, suggested no doubt by the
Italian *canzone*, which he employed in the *Epithalamion*
and *Prothalamion*—stanzas of unequal line-length and
intertwisted rhyme-order which sometimes extend to a
score of lines or thereabouts

Spenser did not, after the *Shepherd's Calendar*, attempt
the lighter kind of lyric, nor anything in trisyllabic measures,
while he seems distinctly to eschew trisyllabic substitution
in others, though it appears sometimes   But this was, in
fact, a condition of his completing, and informing with full
poetic spirit, the prosodic reform of the second and third
quarters of the century   He left English poetry once more
provided—and indeed had furnished it long before his

too early death—with a perfect form of verse, and with.
a nearly perfect form of poetic diction. This diction,
which was almost as much his own work as his stanza,
was at the time, and has been since, much misunderstood
Ben Jonson called it "no language"—an insidious proposi-
tion which, under the truth that it is no language that was
at the time, had been before, or has since been the living
speech of any person or group, conveys the falsehood that
it is therefore unfit for poetry   It is probable that
Chaucer's was, though slightly mixed, much nearer the
actual language of his own time, and for that very reason
it grew obsolete, and, until it was studied from the anti-
quarian point of view, carried the verse with it   Spenser's
blend of actuality, archaism, dialect, borrowings from
French and Italian, and the like, provided a literary
medium which, though parts of it too have become anti-
quated, has as a whole provided patterns for all subsequent
poets   The most disputable of his devices, though it has
a certain quaint charm of its own, is what is called his
"eye-rhyme"—a system of altering the spelling of some
words so that they may not only sound alike on the voice
but look alike on the page

CHAPTER III

The high and (it is believed) thoroughly well-deserved
praise bestowed upon Spenser at the close of the last
chapter must not lead the student to suppose that Spenser
worked alone, that he was the sole restorer and perfecter
of English prosody at this time, or even that his work
included all that was necessary or desirable   That work,
as has been pointed out, tended towards the complete
restoration of regular and at the same time thoroughly
musical and spirited verse, but it kept—except in the
early experiments of the *Shepherd's Calendar*—to the
regular side, avoiding much trisyllabic substitution as well
as "triple time" generally, and eschewing, likewise, strictly
lyrical movements save of the stateliest kind, very much
"broken and cuttit" [1] verse, and the like

As regards pure triple or anapæstic measures, no great
advance was made until nearly the close of this present
period, though a few isolated attempts can be quoted
But the principle of trisyllabic substitution was secured,
once for all, by the development of blank verse, and the
variation of lyric was fully maintained by the practice
of a hundred poets, from the contributors, sometimes
quite obscure, to the *Miscellanies* which came later than
Tottel, through Sidney and others of the first great
Elizabethan division, through Drayton and many more

[1] A phrase of King James (VI. of Scotland and I. of England), *v inf*
Bks III and IV

of the second, down to the famous group of " Caroline,"
" Cavalier," or " metaphysical " poets who were contemporary with Milton

And first of blank verse.

Blank verse   The earliest examples of this great metre in Surrey
were, naturally enough, very exact in syllabic length and
somewhat monotonous in arrangement and effect   Deprived of the warning bell of rhyme, and having nothing
but the structure of the verse itself to rely upon, the poet
was almost inevitably tempted to make very sure of that
structure by moulding it singly, and ensuring a distinct
stop at the close   This rather aggravates than relieves
itself in the satiric blank verse of Gascoigne (*The Steel
Glass*) and the dramatic blank verse of Sackville and
Norton (*Gorboduc*), while when the immediate predecessors
of Shakespeare, called the University Wits (Marlowe, Peele,
Greene, and the rest), took up the vehicle for general
theatrical practice, they never completely got clear of
the same fashion — which Shakespeare himself adopted
Before   in his earliest attempts   Admiration, just in itself, for
Shake
speare   Marlowe has made some try to discover in him, and
perhaps also in Peele (where there is really a little more
of it), the trisyllabic substitution, the variation of pause,
and the overrunning of sense and rhythm from line to line,
which are necessary to break up this "single-mouldedness "
But, except as to a very few passages where actual passion
melts the ice, they deceive themselves   In the couplet
(*v inf*) Marlowe did arrive at enjambment , in blank verse,
hardly ever   The beauty of such verse as his in the
more majestic, as Peele's in the sweeter kind, can hardly be
exaggerated, but neither has yet got complete command of
all means of achieving beauty

The three chief means which they, on the whole, missed,
and over which Shakespeare (profiting by their advance as
far as they made it) gradually gained the mastery, have
been indicated as the overrunning of the line, the variation
of the pause, and, above all, the employment of trisyllabic
feet   We can see Shakespeare step by step attaining these,

as well as the more doubtful and dangerous redundant
syllable, which in his last stage he rather abused, and
which Beaumont and Fletcher and later dramatists were to
abuse still more   All these means, but especially the three
first (for redundance is compatible with single-moulded-
ness), break up the single-moulded line, and substitute for
it (except in cases where it is specially wanted) the verse-
clauses and verse-paragraphs, which it is the glory of
Shakespeare to have perfected   In his certainly earliest In him,
plays—*The Comedy of Errors, Titus Andronicus, The Two
Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost* to some extent—
single-mouldedness still appears strongly   But there are
exceptions even in them, and these exceptions gradually
pervade, mellow, and diversify the prosodic composition, till
it attains the perfect accomplishment of *As You Like It*
and *Hamlet*.   Yet a fifth peculiarity and innovation—the
lengthening and shortening of lines—though it may have
originally been a mere easement or liberty, and is often
much abused by other dramatists, becomes in Shakespeare's
hands a fresh instrument of concerted music—the frequent
regular Alexandrines relieving the decasyllable by direct
contrast, and fragments being generally (*v sup*) so arranged
as to give genuine fractions of the normal scansion itself

Practically all the secrets and all the accomplishments and after
shown—perhaps all the accomplishments possible—at this him in
period are to be found in Shakespeare   The differences drama
of the other dramatists are rather rhetorical than strictly
prosodic, and the efforts sometimes made to construct
special prosodies for them are mostly lost labour   Beaumont
and Fletcher (who seem, from uncertain but pretty strong
evidence, to have actually collaborated with Shakespeare in
the *Two Noble Kinsmen*) develop his latest mood—that where,
as in *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale,* and *The Tempest,* there is
much redundance [1]   They carried it much further than he
did, and undoubtedly too far, though the great poetical

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[1] That, reversing the order, Shakespeare borrowed this from them, is a
recent notion, extremely difficult to reconcile with external evidence, and
going in the very teeth of internal

power which both possessed saved them   On the other
hand, Ben Jonson, all whose tastes were classical (*i e* in
favour of restriction and order), adopted a rather hard and
limited, though rhetorically fine, fashion of blank verse
On the others it would be unprofitable to enlarge much here
Massinger is perhaps interesting as working with the most
obviously *literary* eye on his predecessors—a tendency
which is continued in Shirley.   But in the latter there is
some, if not much, of a special degeneration which by
Shirley's own later days had nearly destroyed dramatic
blank verse itself, and which was only arrested by the sub-
stitution for it of the "heroic" couplet, as used in the
plays called by the same name

Its degenera-
tion   This degeneration, which is most evident in Davenant
and Suckling, but which appears to some, though not to
a great extent, in Shirley, and in most others of the play-
writers up to the closing of the theatres, should be carefully
compared with the initial stage of the measure in English
Then, as we saw, the absence of the guiding and pre-
serving influence of rhyme made writers especially and
excessively careful of exact syllabisation, of punctilious
though monotonous rhythm, and of meticulous separation
of one line from another   So also we have seen that, in the
second or great period, the restrictions were loosened—
that Shakespeare, preserving perfect metrical harmony, sub-
stituted an ordered licence for them all   But even he perhaps
a little latterly, and his followers Beaumont and Fletcher
much more, exceeded in the redundant syllable   The third
generation, though including, as in the three cases specially
mentioned above, men of no small poetic talent, made the
common, the apparently inevitable, but the disastrous
mistake of considering beauty not merely as directly con-
nected with apparent irregularity, but as to be secured by
irregularity itself   Much of their blank verse is extremely
blank, but not verse at all, nor yet prose, but an awkward
hybrid   Not a little is prose pure and simple   It is
scarcely surprising that, after the Restoration, the metre
should have been regarded as "too mean even for a copy

of verses," and discarded, for more than a few years, in drama itself   Except the broken-down rhyme-royal of the fifteenth century (to which it bears a striking resemblance without the excuse there available) there is no more really disgraceful department of English poetry

At the very time, however, when this disorganisation of dramatic blank verse was at its worst, and when it had as yet only been used on the rarest occasions for any other purpose, its great restorer began, though he did not for a long time continue, the process of restoration   Milton s *Comus* (1634) exhibits him as a student, and consequently an imitator, of all the three preceding schools, excepting the contemporary degradation, which was impossible to such a born master of harmony   He has now caught, and often directly reproduces, the single-moulded line of Marlowe , and, on the other hand, he is almost equally inclined to the excessively redundanced endings of Beaumont and Fletcher, even to the extent of frequently making the last foot an anapæst [1]   Yet he not seldom closely approaches Shakespeare himself in the varied modulation, without excessive laxity, of his lines, and in the weaving of them, through overlapping, presence, absence and shifting of pause, and the like, into a verse paragraph   He inserts Alexandrines, but does not use verse-fragments much   And he begins a process—of which he was to be the greatest master—of adding to the colour, and enhancing the form, of lines by striking and important words, especially proper names   But fine as the blank verse of *Comus* is, it is, when we compare it with the lyrical close of the piece itself, evidently in the experimental stage   And it does not show the complete and assured command which is visible in the octosyllables and mixed lyrics

When, later, he once more employed blank verse (and

[1] Not, of course, that this is not sometimes most successful, as in Tennyson's

   And flashing round and round and whirled | *in an arch*,

but that it is dangerous, and if often used would be intolerable

this time blank verse only) in *Paradise Lost*,[1] there was
nothing of experiment left in it   The system, in whatever
way it may be interpreted, is quite obviously one which
the poet has completely mastered, and which he is using
without the slightest doubt or difficulty   It has given the
pattern for all narrative, in fact for all non-dramatic, blank
verse since , it established, though not quite at once, the
measure as one of the great staples for this general use ,
and though there have been times at which it was not
generally popular, and persons by whom it was heartily
disliked, there has been a sort of general consensus, some-
times grudging, but oftener enthusiastic, that it is one of
the greatest achievements of English poetry

It is therefore inevitable that the partisans of the
various systems of that poetry on its formal side, of which
accounts were given in the beginning of this *Manual*,
should all try to vindicate it for their own views   Attempts
are still made (though chiefly by foreigners who naturally
cannot bring the necessary ear) to reduce *Paradise Lost* to
a strict decasyllabic arrangement, no extra syllables being
allowed at all   This, of course, is merely hideous, and
involves numerous crass absurdities, such as the reduction
of, " so oft " to " soft "[2]

[1] Published in 1667, and so more than thirty years after *Comus*   But
perhaps begun at least fifteen years earlier

[2] I o give a thoroughly satisfactory discussion of Milton's prosody
would need space quite out of proportion here   The writer has done
what he could, in this direction, in the long chapter devoted to the subject
in his larger *History*   But some examples, illustrations, and parallel
scannings under different systems may be added to the text of this
Manual   And first in regard to printing

(*a*) In the printed *Paradise Lost* the line

Above *th* *A*onian mount, while it pursues

appears with the apostrophe , but below—

Delight thee more, and S*iloa*'s brook that flowed—

has no attempt to indicate elision by printing

(*b*)   And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer—

if this is to be made strictly dissyllabic, we must pronounce " spir't,'
though not so printed , but, a little lower—

The accentualists, as such, are not driven to equal straits unless they choose, indeed, though accentual prosody can never give an adequate account of Milton's verse, there is no reason why it should not give a partially correct one If any one says that Milton employs a verse of five accents—these usually occurring at the even places of a normal line, but not infrequently varied in position, sometimes separated by more than one unaccented syllable, but usually by one only—he will give, in his own language and

> Innu|mera|ble force | of spir|its armed

absolutely requires the full value

(*c*)   Sing, Hea*v'n*ly Muse, that, on the secret top

favours the idea that Milton as most Elizabethans certainly did, thought " Heaven a monosyllable   But compare line 297 —

> On Hea|ven's a|zure , and | the tor|rid clime

(*d*) Note too, words like " ominous," " popular   " delicate, printed without attempt to apostrophate, though the middle syllable makes a trisyllabic foot

Again, consider the comparative euphony of the following lines

$$\breve{} \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \breve{}$$
(*e*)   Of glo|ry obscured | as when | the Sun | new risen,

or

$$\breve{} \quad -$$
> Of glor|- yobscured, | etc

$$\breve{} \quad \breve{} - \quad \breve{} \quad -$$
(*f*)   The form | attempt|ing   Where|fore do I | assume

or

$$\triangledown \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad -$$
> The form | attempt|ing   Where|fore d I | assume,

or

> The form | attempt| Wherefore | do I | assume,
>   (*ing*)

with the "-ing " sunk or swallowed somehow " extrametrically "

$$\breve{} \quad \breve{\hspace{-2pt}\breve{}} \breve{} \quad \breve{} \breve{} \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \triangledown \quad - \quad \breve{}-$$
(*g*)   The ani|mal spirits | that from | pure blood | arise,

or

$$\breve{} \breve{} \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \triangledown \quad - \quad \breve{}-$$
> Th'ani|mal spir ts | that from | pure blood | arise

$$\breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \quad - \quad \breve{} \breve{} \quad -$$
(*h*)   Because | thou hast har|kened to | the voice | of thy wife,

or

$$- \quad \smile\hspace{-6pt}\shortparallel$$
> Because | thou'st har|kened to | th' voice of | thy wife

with his own limitations, a correct, though scanty and jejune, account of the thing He will, however, in most cases be found going on, and entering upon very disputable matter He will notice "licences," and will, in some cases, be inclined to deplore, or even denounce, the variation of accent just noted He will also, in most cases, be found declining to accept the unaccented syllables as they stand —indeed he has no machinery ready for doing so without making them a disorderly crowd,—and will endeavour to dispose of them by some process of "elision," inventing extremely ingenious, but mostly arbitrary and sometimes self-confessedly inadequate, specifications of the employment of this If he is of the class of accentualists who prefer the term "stress" and its applications, he will probably go much further still, and allow, or insist upon, the widest variation in the number of stresses, lines of five being indeed the average, but four, three, and, in some extreme cases, even two, being allowed [1] Further intricate subdivisions will be found between believers in these theories who, while ruling out syllables from *scansion* by an elaborate system of metrical fictions, maintain that they are not to be dropped in *pronunciation*, and others who, as most people did unhesitatingly in the eighteenth century, as many did in the earlier nineteenth, and as a few boldly and consistently do still, drop the pronunciation altogether, spelling and pronouncing, as well as scanning, "am'rous," "om'nous," "pop'lar," "del'cate," and the like

The foot system, on the other hand, as it always does, accepts Milton's verse exactly as it stands, takes no kind of liberty with it, and merely strives to discover its characteristics This system finds (with the exception of a very few daring experiments, no one of which can be called wrong in principle, though there may be different opinions about the success of some of them in practice) nothing different from the general laws of English verse, as observed at all its best periods, and as visible, if only in the breach

[1] With possible extension to *eight*, and (for aught I can see on the system) to *ten*

of them, at all, best and worst   Milton's normal line is a
five-foot iambic

$$\smile - \smile - \smile - \smile - \smile -$$

But for these iambics he will substitute trochees or ana-
pæsts, sometimes perhaps tribrachs, very freely, and his
use of the trochee for this purpose is more lavish and more
audacious than that of any other English poet, so much
so that he will allow two to follow each other at the open-
ing of the line, and frequently adopts a choriambic ending
by placing one at the fourth foot   On the other hand, he
seldom has the final anapæst which we found in *Comus*,
or perhaps the Alexandrine, though sometimes there are
fractional lines   By dint of these variations—of which the
trisyllabic (generally anapæstic) foot is the most frequent,
the most successful, and, despite objections, the most
certain—he attains great variety in his line, which he
increases and utilises, for one great purpose, by the same
devices of pause, diction, etc , formerly noticed in *Comus*,
but in a more accomplished manner and to a higher
degree

The purpose is this, that by these, by equally elaborate and
extraordinarily successful variation of the pause, by devices
of diction, and by the use of brilliantly coloured and heavily
weighted proper names and of others, he may construct
a verse-paragraph similar to that which Shakespeare had
already accomplished, but without the special characteristics
of spoken verse   He altered his methods a little—though
perhaps not so much as has been sometimes thought—in
Paradise Regained, and still more in *Samson Agonistes*, where,
however, the renewed dramatic intention has to be con-
sidered.   And, on the whole, especially when taken in com-
bination with his master Shakespeare, he established not
merely the freedom and order of blank verse itself, but the
whole principle of equivalent substitution in English prosody

But it was not in blank verse only that Shakespeare Stanza, etc.,
in Shake-
and Milton played, in prosody, almost more than the part speare,
which they played in poetry generally   In their other work
it is quite as true of them that, from it, all the principles of

English versification could be derived by intelligent study
Shakespeare's early long poems, *Venus and Adonis* and the
Rape of Lucrece—the one in the six-line stanza, the other in
rhyme-royal—rank as the greatest stanza-verse of the last
decade of the sixteenth century except Spenser's , while
his *Sonnets* are, not merely for their poetic spirit, the greatest
in the English form, exhibiting remarkable individuality in
the arrangement of the three quatrains, and an unmatched
power of bringing the last couplet to bear suddenly, with
the utmost prosodic as well as poetic effect   The largely
shortened octosyllabic couplets, scattered about his plays and
among the smaller (some of them technically "doubtful ")
poems, show equal mastery of that form, and have indeed
inspired Fletcher, Wither, Milton, and all practitioners of it
since   But the songs in the plays are, next to his blank
verse, his greatest prosodic triumph   He has got in them
all the contemporary variety and much more than the
usual contemporary freedom, so that such pieces as those
in *The Tempest*,[1] in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and in *As*

> [1] Come un|to these | yellow | sands,
>   And then | take hands
> Courtsied | when you | have and | kiss'd
>   The wild | waves whist,
> Foot it | featly | here and | there ,
> And, sweet | sprites, the | burthen | bear
>   Hark, | hark !|
>   Bow-wow |
>   The watch |dogs bark
>   Bow-wow

(Alternate trochaic and iambic rhythm capable of being made all
iambic by starting with monosyllabic feet   "Come" | "Court-" | " Foot " |
etc   Monosyllabic equivalence in " Hark, hark ! " to " The watch-|dogs
bark ")

You Like It[1] might, had they been attended to and under-
stood, have saved the early critics of Tennyson and some
other nineteenth-century poets from blunders about the
"irregularity," "discord," "un-English character," etc, of
their versification

Except in this last respect (for he does not much indulge   in Milton,
in triple-timed measures), Milton's examples are as striking,
while they are more numerous   In grave stanza of purely
iambic cadence but varied line-length, the ode on the
Nativity is unsurpassed in our poetry   The octosyllabic
couplets (with catalexis) of the *Arcades, L'Allegro*, and *Il
Penseroso*, and the already-mentioned latter part of *Comus*,
stand at the head of their class   *Lycidas*, which is written
in lines mainly decasyllabic, though sometimes of different
length, arranged (except in the last stanza) on no identical
principle, is a practically unique combination of rhyme and
blank verse—the ends being sometimes left unrhymed,
but generally rhymed, though on an apparently irregular
system which never violates harmony, but makes—first
each paragraph and then the whole poem—a piece of
concerted music, a definite prosodic symphony or sonata
And lastly, the choruses of *Samson Agonistes*, when he

$$- \ \cup \ \cup \ - \ \smile \ -$$
[1] Un|der the gre en|wood tree
$$\cup \ - \ \cup \ - \ \cup \ -$$
Who loves | to lie [with me,
$$\cup \ - \ \cup \ - \ \cup \ -$$
And tune | his mer|ry note
$$\triangledown \cup \ \cup \ - \ \triangledown \ -$$
Unto | the sweet | bird's throat,
$$\cup \ - \ \cup \ \cup \ - \ \cup \ -$$
Come hi|ther, come hi|ther, come hi|ther
$$- \ \cup \ \cup \ -$$
Here | shall he see
$$\cup \ - \ \cup \ -$$
No en|emy
$$\cup \ - \ \cup \ - \ \smile \ -$$
But win|ter and | rough weather

$$- \ \cup \ \cup \ - \ \smile \ \smile \ \cup \ -$$
("Under | the green-" and "Here shall | he see" would scan equally
well in themselves, but line 5, "Come hither," gives the anapæstic hint
$$- \ \cup \cup \ -$$
and key   "No | enemy" is possible)

had returned to rhyme, apply this system on more
extensive principles [1] still, occasionally attempting quite
new measures,[2] and getting the utmost possible result out
of large variation of line-length in the same or in mixed
cadences   Some of the experiments are less successful than
others, and, on the whole, *Samson* displays a *harder* style of
verse than the earlier poems, but it is equally important as
exhibiting the true principles of English prosody   Indeed,
when Milton had published it, he may be said to have closed
the formative period of our versification, not in the sense
that he had not left infinite things to be done, but that he

[1] *Oct , Iamb ,* (This, this | is he , | softly | awhile ,
     and Troch (Let us | not break | in up|on him
          Dec   O change | beyond | report, | thought, or | belief !
          Alex   See how | he lies | at ran|dom, care|lessly | diffused,
        Hexasyl With lan|guished head | unpropt,
   Hexasyl hyperc As one | with hope | aban|doned,
   Hexasyl hyperc And by | himself | given o|ver,
          Oct   In sla|vish hab|it, ill-fit|ted weeds |
       Tetrasyl O'er worn | and soiled
          Alex   Or do | my eyes | misre|present ? | Can this | be he ?
        Oct cat That he|roic, | that re|nowned,
          Dec   Irre|sisti|ble Sam|son whom, | unarmed,
          Alex   No strength | of man | or fier|cest wild | beast could |
                   withstand ,
          Alex   Who tore | the li|on as | the li|on tears | the kid ,
          Dec   Ran on | embat|tled ar|mies clad | in iron,
        Hexasyl And, wea|ponless | himself, |
          Alex   Made arms | ridi|culous, | useless | the for|gery
          Dec   Of bra|zen shield | and spear | the ham|mered cuirass,
          Dec   Chalyb|ean-tem|pered steel | and frock | of mail
        Hexasyl Ada|mante|an proof

Hardly anything here needs remark, except the use made of the old
catalectic octosyllable beloved from *Comus* days with its trochaic cadence,
and that of half Alexandrines or hexasyllables   There is only one mono
meter, towards the centre or *waist* of the scheme ("O'er worn and soiled ')

[2] Oh, how | comely it | is, and | how re|viving,

     To the | spirits of | just men | long op|pressed,

     When God | into the | hands of | their op|pressor

     Puts in|vincible | night
(Catullian hendecasyllable ?)

had, after Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare, almost completely indicated the principles of doing them

But these principles had been illustrated by others and others during the lifetime of the two,[1] after fashions which even the most summary account of English prosody cannot leave unnoticed , and these fashions, with some general phenomena of this double lifetime, not always specially noticeable in Shakespeare and Milton themselves, must be indicated   The performances of these two " primates "— the one in the English, the other in the Italian form of the sonnet—make it unnecessary to say more of that form, though it was very largely practised in the last decade of the sixteenth century, and beyond all doubt helped much to discipline verse generally   And the same 's true of the octosyllabic couplet, which, however, was very beautifully practised by the Jacobean poets Browne, Wither, and others   But more must be said of the stanza, of the decasyllabic couplet, the fortunes of which in this time were most momentous (and which, as it happens, was only occasionally practised by Shakespeare,[2] scarcely at all by Milton[3]), and of the various forms, so far as their multiplicity does not forbid, of lyric

The novelty, splendour, and apparent difficulty of the Spenserian seem to have imposed on contemporaries to such an extent as to prevent them from copying it in typical form at all , while many years passed before it was attempted in slightly altered forms[4]   The favourite stanza in the later years of Elizabeth was the octave, chiefly in the Italian form, which was very largely written by Drayton, by Daniel, and many others, including Edward Fairfax in his very influential translation of Tasso   Rhyme-royal fell especially out of favour, though Milton used it in his

[1] Milton was eight years old when Shakespeare died, and their combined lives, 1564-1674, more than cover the whole '' major ' Elizabethan period, 1557-1660, except part of its incipient stage, 1557-1580

[2] As a variation to blank verse

[3] Some quite boyish things, a beautiful passage of the *Arcades*, and a few couplets in *Comus* are the exceptions

[4] By the two Fletchers, Giles reducing it to an octave *ababbccc* and Phineas to a septet *ababccc*

early days, and Sir Francis Kynaston wrote a long poem
in it as late as 1648 The decasyllabic quatrain, alternately
rhymed, was used by Davies and others Yet not merely
Ben Jonson (*v inf*) but Drayton himself expressed weari-
ness of the stanza generally, and this undoubtedly grew,
though it continued to be used The new favourite was
the decasyllabic couplet

The
'heroic"
couplet

It has been said that this couplet, despite its splendid
success, and the abundance of varied model for it in
Chaucer, was not much used (and never used well save
perhaps in *The Friars of Berwick*) by his successors It
acquired, however, without any clearly traceable cause, a
considerable hold on the early drama , and, when it was
ejected from this, it revenged itself by turning the stanza
out to a large extent in non-dramatic verse Drayton,
in the passage referred to, speaks of the attraction of "the
gemell," *i e* "the *twinned* line," and practised it not a little
Jonson, we are told, thought couplets (made in a fashion
the specification of which is unfortunately not clear) "the
bravest sort of verses " He did not, however, write them
very largely , but Drayton did And while Marlowe set
a magnificent example in *Hero and Leander*, and others
employed the measure independently, the same sort of
influence in its favour, which was noticed formerly as exer-
cised in Chaucer's case by the final couplets of rhyme-royal,
was beyond all question now exercised afresh by those of
the fashionable *ottava* In fact, the already-mentioned
Tasso of Edward Fairfax (1600) is one of the recognised
originals of a particular form—the stopped or self ended
couplet This the octave, like the English sonnet, which
doubtless had influence too, especially encourages Drayton
and others wrote as Chaucer, we saw, had written, almost
indifferently in both kinds, at least so that neither has
marked and dominant character But Marlowe, in strik-
ing contrast to his blank-verse practice, decidedly pre-
ferred, and practised exquisitely, the opposite or "enjambed"
variety

By degrees, however, there grew up in the seventeenth

century what has been perhaps not incorrectly described Enjambed
as a "battle of the couplets"—certain poets definitely
employing one form, others the other, while in at least
one case [1] the preference is distinctly and combatively
avowed   As a sect, clearly marked, the enjambers or
disciples of Marlowe are the older   Their most dis-
tinguished representatives are, in the earlier part or first
quarter of the century, William Browne, George Wither—
who in the piece called *Alresford Pool* produced one
of the most beautiful separate examples of the kind,—a
rather mysterious person named John Chalkhill, to whom
Izaak Walton was godfather and usher, in the second
and at the beginning of the third, the dramatist Shakerley
Marmion and William Chamberlayne   The latter's poem
of *Pharonnida* [2] is the longest example of the style, and
in flashes and short passages the most poetical of all,
but it also exhibits the defects of that style most flagrantly
These defects come from the fact that the poet—allowed
to neglect his rhyme as a warning bell of termination
of something, and to use it as a mere accompaniment—
allows his clauses and sentences to run into a sometimes
quite bewildering prolixity, and very frequently neglects
even that modified restriction of the line itself to some
distinct form and outline which both good blank verse
and this form of couplet equally require   The result,
assisted by the ugly fancy of the time for apostrophated
elisions, sometimes comes near to the contemporary
degradation of blank verse itself which has been men-
tioned

There can be no reasonable doubt that these excesses and stopped.
and defects stimulated attention to the stopped form of the
couplet, and as little that this attention was, though not
unmixedly, decidedly beneficial to English verse   It was
becoming, and had soon become, desirable, not merely
that such things as this excessive enjambment in couplet

[1] That of Sir John Beaumont (*v sup* p 78 *et inf* Book III)
[2] This, like Marmion's *Cupid and Psyche*, Chalkhill's *Thealma and Clearchus* and other pieces exemplifying the form, is a verse-*romance*, a kind for which that form has special, though dangerous, adaptation

and as the degeneration of blank verse should be corrected, but that the valuable and indeed inestimable assertion of the right to trisyllabic substitution which blank verse had once more brought out, and which was prompting the use once more of purely or mainly trisyllabic *measures*, should be met, and for a time at any rate restrained, by the counter-assertion of the necessity of rhythmical smoothness and regularity   The language—though there is no reason to believe that the general pronunciation of Shakespeare's time was so different from ours as some have thought—was still going through changes of accent and the like , and, as yet, general notions on prosody were rare, for the most part very ignorant of the actual history of English poetry, and as a rule badly expressed   In these circumstances it is not surprising that the form—even the music—of the stopped and as nearly as possible normal decasyllabic couplet should appeal to many   The accepted growth of it is marked traditionally by the names of Fairfax, Sandys, and, above all, Waller, from whom Dryden (not to be noticed in detail till the next chapter) derived his pattern   But the clearest notion both of the principles and of the attraction of the form is to be obtained from the lines of Sir John Beaumont, quoted and discussed elsewhere

For the present, however, the stopped couplet—even as such, and in comparison with its rival—was struggling not so much for mastery as for recognition, and Ben Jonson's idea of its being (if he really thought so) "the bravest of all" was nowhere near general acceptance   In particular, the production of lyric between Spenser's time and the Restoration—if not even considerably later—was immense in quantity, almost unique in variety, and never surpassed in poetical merit, though until late in the period it mostly, except in Shakespeare and a few others, confined itself to dissyllabic feet [1]   The poetical miscellanies

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[1] The continuous anapæst appears, after Tusser, in Elizabethan poetry chiefly in popular ballad , and it is only about 1645 that literary poets, like Waller and Cleveland, take it up

of the later Elizabethan time, and the lyrical work of Lyric.
Sidney, Drayton, Jonson, Campion, and many others,
brought out the song capacity of English as it had never
been brought out before, and in the later portion of the
period the poets specially known as "Caroline"—that is
to say, of the period of Charles the First, with a smaller
but remarkable contingent from the earlier days of his son
—Herrick, Carew, Crashaw, Vaughan, Stanley, King, and
almost dozens of others down to Rochester, Sedley, and
Afra Behn—tried almost infinite varieties of line-length
and line-adjustment with delightful results And it is
specially to be noticed that this lyric never broke down
as couplet and blank verse were doing—that it always
retained the tradition of metrical harmony which Wyatt
and Surrey had reintroduced into English literary poetry,
and which Spenser had perfected

CHAPTER IV

Recapitula-
tion

IT is desirable, if not absolutely necessary, at this point (*circa* 1660, which, though not in strict number of years or centuries, is in fact the central stage of English prosody) to halt and recapitulate what had been done since the formation of Middle English by the influence of Latin and French upon Old   The conditions of the blend having necessitated a new prosody, that prosody was, as was natural, slowly elaborated, but the lines which it was to take, in consequence of the imposition of strict form upon a vigorous and strongly characterised but rather shapeless material, appeared almost at once   Metre replaced the unmetrical rhythm of Anglo-Saxon, but this metre had to take forms greatly more elastic than the strict syllabic arrangement of French, and differently constituted from the also mainly syllabic arrangement of Lower Latin   And so, in the verse of the thirteenth and earlier fourteenth century, a foot-system, with allowance of equivalent substitution, makes its appearance—roughly, but more and more clearly   Nor is this at all affected by the alliterative revival of the last-mentioned period, which partly makes terms with metre and rhyme, partly pursues its own way—to reach its highest point with Langland, and to die away soon after the close of the fifteenth century   At the very same time with Langland himself, the pure metrical system is brought to its highest perfection by Chaucer.   But this perfection depends on

a state of the language which is "precarious and not at
all per̶m̶a̶n̶e̶n̶t̶ the fifteenth century English metre,
as far as the ̶ ̶ ̶ ̶ ̶d main division of the language
is concerned ̶ ̶ ̶ ̶ ̶ ̶ great extent, into anarchy

From th̶i̶s̶ ̶ ̶ ̶ ̶ is rescued, no doubt, as a general
determining ̶ ̶ ̶ ̶ the settling once more of ̶ ̶ ̶ pro-
nunciation, b̶ ̶ ̶ ̶ly and particularly by the eff̶ect̶s of
Wyatt, Surrey, a̶n̶ ̶ ̶ their minor successors from 1525 to
1575   Then Spe̶nse̶r comes, and performs almost more
than the work of C̶h̶auc̶er, inasmuch as his material is
more trustworthy and has fewer seeds of decay in it.
He, like his predecessors, recoiling from th̶e̶ frightful
disorder of the preceding century, inclines, save in his
earliest work, to a rather strict form of verse, mostly
dissyllabic   But the mere exigencies of the stage, the
nature of blank verse itself when once established, and
the genius of Shakespeare, restore there the liberty of
trisyllabic substitution, and the influence of music helps
to bring in trisyllabic measures — "triple time" — as
such   In Shakespeare first the whole freedom, as well
as nearly the whole order, of English prosody discovers
itself   But this freedom is pushed by others to licence,
and blank verse becomes practically as ruinous a heap as
the rhyme-royal of the fifteenth century, with one form
of decasyllabic couplet keeping it company, if not quite
in actual cacophony, at any rate in disorderly slackness
Then Milton restores blank verse to almost all the freedom
and more than the order of Shakespeare, infusing also
into all the other metres that he touches this same
combination , so that in these two practically everything
is reached   But poetic fervour dies down , blank verse
becomes for a time unpopular , the age calls for the
more prosaic subject - kinds of verse—satire, didactics,
etc , prevailing standards of prosody are strictly regulated
to an accomplished but decidedly limited "smoothness"
The results of this, with a few exceptions reserved, we are
to see in the present chapter

It was fortunate that the poet under whom this "Reign

Dryden's
couplet

of Order" was introduced, was one who had in himself a
certain irrepressible vigour and *verve*, which would not
tolerate mere monotony   John Dryden wrote most of his
most famous poems in the couplet, and in a stopped form
of it, but he did not confine himself thereto, using also
the heroic quatrain (which he made an exceedingly fine
measure), "Pindarics" (of which the same may be said),
occasional, though few, octosyllabics, and lyrical measures
of the most varied kind, both dissyllabic and trisyllabic,
which sometimes do not fall far short of all but the very
best work of the preceding generation   His couplet itself,
moreover, was not quite rigidly stopped, and even if it
had been, was so largely varied by the licences of triplet,
Alexandrine, and sometimes these two combined, that the
purely or mainly mechanical effect with which his successor
Pope is charged, and which is undoubtedly to be observed
in that successor's imitators, does not impress itself   Even
had these devices (which may be said themselves to have
something mechanical about them) not been present, the
extraordinary nerve and full-bloodedness of Dryden's verse
would have been almost if not quite sufficient to remove
the reproach   The antithetic yet never snip-snap explosion
of his distichs, the way in which they fling themselves
against the object, the momentum given to them by striking
words strikingly placed, ingenious manipulation of pause, un-
expected and exciting turns of phrase—are unprecedented
His prosody may be called a somewhat rhetorical prosody,
but it is the very highest of its own kind   It exercised
strong and good influence over the whole classical period
with which we are dealing in this chapter, a little after
the middle of the eighteenth century it effected a diversion
from the too monotonous limitation of Pope, and in the
very hey-day of the Romantic movement it taught new
devices, and revealed new sources of prosodic beauty, to
Keats.

Great, however, as are the merits of this couplet verse
of Dryden's, and incomparably well as it is adapted for
argument, satire, exposition, and other things somewhat

extra-poetical in themselves, there is something artificial
in its limitations   And it is a matter of experience, that
when you make artificial rules for a game, this artificiality
always tends to make itself more artificial   Moreover, it is
not only fair, but important, to allow that Dryden's licences
of triplet and Alexandrine (in the latter case sometimes
extended even to a fourteener) require ability and judg-
ment, equal to his own, to prevent mismanagement of them
In clumsy hands something almost as amorphous as the
broken-down blank verse and the unduly enjambed coup-
let of the preceding generation might easily come of them.
It is therefore not surprising that, the attention of the
average poet being more and more concentrated on this
couplet, attempts should be made to reduce the liberties,
and perfect the correctness, as much as possible   They
are visible even in such writers as Garth, between Dryden
and Pope, they are still more visible in Pope himself, and Pope s.
when, some decade after Dryden's death, he began to
publish verse   He does not, especially at first, entirely
discontinue triplet and Alexandrine, but he uses them
more and more sparingly, and indeed sneers at the latter.
He draws the pause more invariably to the centre, and sets
up a more distinct division between the halves of his line.
While separating his couplets more closely, he lightens the
vowel-effects of his rhymes, so that there shall be no
temptation to linger at couplet-ends   And though he is
traditionally said to have had a special fancy for a couplet
of his which contains an almost indestructible trisyllabic
foot,[1] such feet, as a rule, are quite smoothed out of
his verse

The unmatched regularity, harmony (as far as it went),
and accomplishment of Pope's couplet, and his great
superiority to all other poets in these respects during the
second, third, and fourth decades of the eighteenth century,
assisted the general taste, which has been mentioned, in

[1] Lo ! where Mœotis sleeps, and hardly flows

$\qquad \cup \qquad \cup \; \cup$

The freez|ing Tana|is through a waste of snows

The Dunciad, iii 87, 88

Their pre-
dominance.

raising his form of couplet to the highest place in popular estimation, as well as—sometimes expressly, sometimes by a sort of silent taking for granted—in formal discussions of poetry   Savage to some extent, Churchill still more, and after him Cowper, reverted, as has been said, to a standard nearer Dryden's   But Johnson, Goldsmith, and others, with the whole mob of inferior writers, followed Pope, as did also Crabbe, who maintained the practice of the form till the very time of the appearance of Tennyson   The defects, or at least the limitations, of it were indeed sometimes seen, and were commented on, in striking though not fully informed fashion, by poets like Shenstone in the first half of the century, and Cowper again in the second But it constituted, none the less, the orthodox mode of the whole time, and longer, and when, nearly at the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Keats's critics found fault with his ignorance or mismanagement of the structure of the English heroic line and couplet, what they meant was, whether they knew it or not, that he managed that line and that couplet differently from Pope

Eighteenth
century
octosyllable
and
anapæst

Although, however, the stopped couplet thus gradually established in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and exercised during the whole of the eighteenth, a sort of tyranny, not every poet nor every metre bowed his or its head to this   Even in the first half of the eighteenth, poets like Collins and Gray practically shook it off, the first using it only in his early and immature work, the second hardly at all   They will therefore be reserved for the next chapter   Others, though using it, also practised metres different from it, and some of these were of a character peculiarly suited to counteract any bad influence that it might have   Among these the most important and the earliest—for both of them passed a considerable portion of their lives in the seventeenth century itself—were Prior and Swift, both of whom, but especially Prior, were proficients in the "Hudibrastic" octosyllable and in the new continuous anapæstic.   The octosyllable, with its easy ambling pace, its fluent overlapping, and its often prolonged and fanciful

rhymes, corrected the somewhat stiff snip-snap of the larger couplet , while the anapæst peremptorily brought back trisyllabic rhythm, with all its marvellous refreshments and advantages, and, if only for convenience, suggested substitution of feet [1]   The great literary authority and popularity of these two poets, and the intrinsic charm of Prior, established, for metres that they used, a safe position throughout the period of decasyllabic domination   Even Bysshe put "lines of eight and seven syllables" almost on a level with those of "ten or eleven", and though he sneered at anapæsts, and introduced them by a singular roundaboutness of expression, [2] did not absolutely bar them in fact

Blank verse—than which, in its perfection, there is no **Blank verse** more powerful guard and corrective as regards the possible errors of the stopped couplet—was not put in operation, except by Milton at the very beginning of the period, so early as these   In fact, as has been said, it was the degradation of blank verse, almost as much as anything else which encouraged the growth of this form of rhyme   Nor was the all-powerful influence of Milton himself at once felt, except by a very few persons , [3] while, when it began to be felt, it was not fully understood   Attempts, however, were by degrees made in it , [4] and, some sixty years after the appearance of *Paradise Lost*, the beginning of Thomson's *Seasons* brought to bear a new, popular, and powerful agency.   Although Thomson may have been under the elision and "apostrophation" delusions of his time, he did not attempt to avoid what his younger contemporary, Shenstone, called "virtual" trisyllabic feet One of his best lines, for instance—

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[1] In the actual case of course, dissyllabic feet for trisyllabic , but this could not but suggest the converse process in dissyllabic verse   And the octosyllable was not used for light verse only , Dyer in *Grongar Hill* (1726) revived the Miltonic form of *L'Allegro*, etc , with an effect all the more certainly excellent, that it was demurred to by the mistaken critics of the time   [2] *V inf* pp 242-5

[3] Among whom Lord Roscommon deserves honourable mention

[4] As by Watts the hymn-writer, John Philips, and Gay

The yellow wall- | flower, stain | ed with iron brown,

contains such a foot naturally, though you may slur and
"apostrophate" it into "flow'r", and there are endless
others, ready to suggest themselves to a nice ear, when-
ever you come across such words as "pastoral" and
"impetuous" in—

Shines o'er | the rest | the pas | toral queen, | and rays

Impet | uous rush | es o'er | the sound | ing void

But an even more valuable effect of blank-verse practice
was the inevitable reappearance of the verse-paragraph, with
its necessary constituents the verse-sentences and verse-
clauses, which need not—and, if a good effect is to be
produced, *must* not—be made of successive batches of
complete lines, still less of batches of equal size In forging
the verse-paragraph, variation of pause, overrunning of sense
as regards line-ends, strong breaks in the actual lines
(a thing almost abused by Thomson himself, and quite
so by his followers, but in itself a caustic to one of the evils
of couplet verse), are necessary implements and materials
Accordingly the staunchest devotees of the couplet, such as
Johnson, always dislike blank verse , and when, later, a poet
like Cowper takes it up, his action is similarly connected
with dislike to the "mechanic warbling" of the Popian
style   In his hands, especially in the late and splendid
example of "Yardley Oak," almost the full Miltonic variety
is recovered   But always, and throughout its practice during
the eighteenth century, it acts as a foil, a relief and a refuge
to and from the limitations and restrictions of the couplet
itself

and lyric   Lastly, a similar enfranchising influence was exercised
by lyric , but to a comparatively limited extent   The genius
of the latest seventeenth century and of almost the whole
eighteenth, except in a few poets (mostly to be kept as
exceptions, with Gray and Collins, who were of them, to the
next chapter), was by no means lyrical.   The healthiest

influence of it was supplied by anapæstic forms, especially
in light verse. "Pindarics" were at first much used, but
were too often of a most prosaic character ("Romance-six"
was affected to an almost surprising degree, but for the
most part in a rather *Sir Thopas*-like form, exact and sing-
song This was also the fault of most of the common
measure or ballad-quatrain, such as the well-known
examples of Percy and Goldsmith,) though the *Reliques* of
the former gave better models (somewhat tampered with
by the editor) forty years before 1800, and the mis-
cellaneous collections of Durfey and Philips had to
some extent done so nearly as much earlier still The
Evangelical revival, by infusing more passion and reality
into hymns, had a good effect, and when we come to
Cowper, this influenced his profane as well as his sacred
poetry Nor should we omit to mention—as a really
powerful counter-agent to the couplet, with its monotonous
regularity, unqualified rhyme, and so on—the irregularly
rhythmed prose of Macpherson's *Ossian*, which appeared
about the same time as the *Reliques*, and attracted much
attention

By all these things, and by the special influence of the
poets to be mentioned in the early part of the next
chapter, useful testimony was continuously given, to the
effect that, after all, the decasyllabic couplet, especially in
the prevailing form, was not the only metre, nor even the
only important metre, in English But its predominance
continued, and its characteristics, as has been said, to some
extent infected or inoculated its rivals "Inoculated"
rather than "infected," for, once more let it be repeated,
this predominance undoubtedly beat into the English
tongue, ear, and mind a sense of the importance of real
and regular rhythm—a sense which, for another hundred
years and more, has prevented, in the freest expatiation of
released prosody, any kind of return to the disorder of the
whole fifteenth century, and in some respects, at any rate,
of the mid-seventeenth.

CHAPTER V

Gray and
Collins

WE must now take up, somewhat more minutely, the
phenomena mentioned in the last chapter as showing
revolt against, and recovery from, the partly beneficial but
excessive tyranny of the stopped decasyllabic couplet
These may be considered, still briefly but more particularly,
under two heads   the first concerning chiefly the influence
of individual poets—Collins, Gray, Chatterton, Burns,
Blake, the second, agencies various in kind and source
Neither Collins nor Gray can be said to have directly
attacked the task—though Gray at least was, as we see
from his *Metrum*, not ignorant of the facts—of re-leavening
and re-illustrating prosody by an infusion of trisyllabic
substitution. (With rarest exceptions, they still cling to
the iamb as a base-foot.)   But they rearrange its line-
groups in a fashion as alien as possible from that of the
couplet   Collins even discards rhyme altogether in the
quatrains of *Evening*, and in his famous "Passions" varies
his construction as much as possible within the general
limits   Gray follows, but improves upon, Dryden in the
rhymed decasyllabic quatrain, adapts, with an effect
somewhat stiff, but often very beautiful, the Greek system
of strophe, antistrophe, and epode in the *Progress of
Poetry* and *The Bard*; employs Romance-six with singular
felicity in both serious and serio-comic verse, and, though
retaining a strongly artificial poetic diction, informs this
with new touches and spirit from sources as a rule quite
closed to his contemporaries and predecessors—Norse and

Welsh as well as Greek   Both these poets, in short, disregard, to a large extent, equality of line-length, and employ mixed rhymes   Now equality of line-length and strictly *consecutive* rhymes were almost as dear to the chief lovers of the couplet as its unvarying syllabic arrangement and its regular accent.

Gray, it has been said, knew substitution, but did not use it, the ill-fated genius of Chatterton not only knew it, but used it   It is present, and very effective, in Burns, but it was not the chief means of good of which Burns availed himself in regard to prosody   His dialect, with its relief from the conventional "lingo" of eighteenth-century poetry, did much, but the forms which he used, and especially the famous "Burns metre," did more   It would be almost impossible to devise a greater contrast to the couplet, or—since (which is at least worth noting) the six lines of this stanza contain exactly as many syllables (forty) as two ordinary couplets—to arrange these same numbers in ways more rhythmically different   But the first eighteenth-century poet thoroughly to understand and exemplify the powers of equivalence is Burns's slightly older contemporary, William Blake, whose *Poetical Sketches* appeared as early as 1780, while his *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, and his remaining poems, display a knowledge of the secrets of this equivalence, and a command over them, which had not been shown since Shakespeare.

Blake, however, expressed rather than exercised influence, for his poems remained long almost unknown, and it may be doubtful whether even the others brought about many conscious prosodic changes   The gradual recovery of knowledge of older English literature, and especially of the ballads, had in all probability much more direct power   Durfey's *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, Philips's *Collection of Old Ballads*, and Percy's *Reliques*—with constantly increasing editions of the Elizabethan dramatists and other writers, even such as Skelton and Occleve— could not but awaken men's minds to the fact that (as Gascoigne had put it in a matter closely connected if not

Margin notes:
Chatterton Burns, and Blake

Other influences of change

absolutely identical) "we had used in times past other
kinds of metres" than the stopped couplet   And towards
the end of the century revolt of various kinds appeared—
copious though usually very tame ballad, multiplied blank
verse of the usual kind, and (in imitation partly of some
older English models and of Collins, partly of the German)
rhymeless verse of different sorts, the chief early practi-
tioner of which was Frank Sayers of Norwich, a physician
and man of letters who was more influential on others
than important in himself   Bowles (after Warton, whose
History of Poetry worked in the same direction) reintroduced
the sonnet   William Taylor, another member of the
Norwich group, revived (again after the German) English
hexameters, and though Hayley, Darwin, and others con-
tinued the eighteenth-century couplet unchanged, the spirit
of the youth of the period was clearly tending in a different
direction

Words
worth,
Southey,
and Scott.

Of the four great champions of reaction who were born
about 1770, Wordsworth, though he illustrates the change
generally, and never, in his principal work, uses the stopped
couplet, is not very noticeable prosodically [1]   The three
others are, in different ways, of the first importance
Southey, as early as 1796, not merely practised, but,
which is much more, practised deliberately, and definitely
defended in a letter to an objecting friend, the use of
three syllables for two   Moreover (not confining himself
to the ballad metre, which he had employed and which he
was specially justifying), he alleged the practice of Milton,
frankly stigmatising as "asses" the editors who had
endeavoured to disguise this practice as "elision"   Scott
—assisted perhaps to some extent by hearing a recitation
or reading of Coleridge's unpublished *Christabel*, but un-
doubtedly also following [2] the example of the innumerable

[1] His greatest prosodic achievement is also his greatest achievement
in poetry, the "Immortality" Ode   But, though he varies line length
admirably, the prevailing rhythm is merely iambic, and when, in stanza 4,
he tries to vary it, the effect is very unfortunate

[2] Scott was a debtor for something as well to "Monk ' Lewis   See
"List of Poets," Book IV.

ballad- and romance-writers with whom he was almost better acquainted than any other man in Britain—produced first ballad-pieces, and then, in and after *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, continuous narrative poems of great length, for the most part couched in equivalenced octosyllables, but often much varied in rhyme-arrangement and diversified by shorter and longer lines   And there is no doubt that the enormous popularity of these poems of his did more than anything else to familiarise the public ear with metres and cadences as different as possible from the couplet.

But the influence of Coleridge, independent of that indirectly applied through Scott, was the most important of all   It was indeed not (as it should have been) exhibited, at once and in bulk, by the simultaneous publication of *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, the latter of which, though, at least in great part, written at the same time as the former, was separated from it in publication by nearly twenty years   *The Ancient Mariner* itself is in ballad metre, but ballad metre treated in the freest possible fashion, not only with equivalence used at pleasure in individual lines, but with the four lines of the strict quatrain extended to five, or any number up to nine—thereby increasing and varying the stanza-effect in the widest possible manner, though never expanding it into positive paragraphs   More important still, because more apparently novel, though it had been in fact preluded both by Chatterton and Blake, and had been recognised by Gray in the work of Spenser, was the use, in *Christabel*, of continuous octosyllabic couplets, only sometimes, and rarely, broken into stanza, but constantly equivalenced and frequently varied by shorter lines   Of these, Coleridge himself gave in his preface a curiously inadequate account, regarding them—or at least giving them out—as constructed on the principle of counting only the accents   They, however, in fact follow the strictest foot-division, and have been the pattern of all similar verses, with equivalent substitution, since.

Moore   Moore, who comes in point of date between this group
and the second great trio of Byron, Shelley, and Keats, is
very important prosodically   Since the earlier seventeenth
century at latest, music, though it had had much and
rather deleterious influence on theories of English prosody,
had had little on its practice, a few light things excepted.
But Moore was an accomplished musician both in theory
and practice, in composition and in execution , he belonged
to a race distinguished for song-gift , and the great majority
of his almost innumerable lyrics were directly composed
for old airs or adapted to new   The consequence was,
almost inevitably, that they present a variety of cadence
and rhythm which had hardly ever before been seen
Occasionally this variety oversteps the bounds of pure
prosody, allowing, as in the well-known "Eveleen's Bower," [1]
a syllable which, corresponding to an *appoggiatura* in music,
requires, in strict scansion, to be slurred or else to be con-
sidered extra-metrical, as in the "Song to a Portuguese
Air," [2] and others, further licences   He was himself aware
of this, and it did little harm , while the tunefulness of his
trisyllabic measures, and the great range of "broken and
cuttit" line-arrangements which his work presented, were
both of the first importance in promoting variety and
freedom of metrical arrangement

His expertness in the two arts, however, and his

[1] And wept | behind [the] clouds | o er the maid|en's shame

That stain | upon [the] snow | of fair Ev|eleen's fame

[2] Where three lines like the following occur

Should those | fond hopes | e er for|sake thee,

Which now | so sweet|ly thy heart | employ,

On our thresh|old a wel|come still found,

and are quite irreconcilable

constant combination of them, as well as perhaps his Byron
inferiority (though this is only relative) in strictly poetical
power, somewhat reduce Moore's importance as compared
with that of Byron, Shelley, and Keats   The first-named
was the least of the three in prosody, as in poetry , but
his prosodic merits have, as a rule, been far under-
valued, even by his adorers as a poet.   He affected, and
perhaps really to some extent felt, much greater admira-
tion for the eighteenth-century poets, and for those
who mainly or partly followed them in his own time,
than for the innovators of the Romantic school ; and he
himself wrote the stock couplet with correctness and
vigour   But he chose for his principal serious poem,
Childe Harold, the Spenserian, which "regular" classical
critics had always disliked, and, though he never achieved its
proper character, did finely in it sometimes, and undoubtedly
restored its popularity   Again, he chose for his greatest
serio-comic pieces, *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, the *ottava* , while
his minor tales were in Scott-*Christabel* octosyllables   In
lyric, too, he showed varied power, and once turned [1] what
had been a burlesque before in its exact, and a very sing-
song metre in its restricted, form into a thing of remarkable
prosodic beauty, to be made more beautiful still by Praed
and Mr Swinburne   His most consummate prosodic
achievement is undoubtedly the above-mentioned octave
of *Don Juan*, which can hardly be surpassed, either in
suitability to its subject, or in the way in which the parti-
cular characteristics of the metre itself are brought out
     But the greatest poets are naturally, and almost inevi-
tably, the greatest prosodists , and this was well seen in
the case of the two whom we have yet to mention, Shelley Shelley
and Keats, who also present a valuable and interesting his longer
contrast in this as in other ways   It is probable that in poems
all cases Shelley began with direct though not studious
imitation   His early and almost worthless poems were
based on "Monk " Lewis and others of that type ; his first
striking thing, the opening of *Queen Mab*, is a sort of

[1] In the " Haidee " song.   *V sup* Scanned Conspectus, § XLIV

variation on that of Southey's *Thalaba*, and his first great poem, *Alastor*, had Wordsworth evidently before it ; while *Laon and Cythna* (*The Revolt of Islam*) would probably not have been in Spenserians if *Childe Harold* had not adopted them, nor perhaps *The Witch of Atlas* in octaves but for *Beppo* Yet, as soon as he has attained poetic gift, he goes off from his models entirely, and, without much apparent care for preconceived forms, achieves the most marvellous beauty in whatever he touches In *Prometheus Unbound* especially, the blank-verse dialogue, and the abundant lyrical choruses and interludes, not only exhibit wholly astonishing variety and individual excellence, but adapt themselves to each other, as nowhere else in drama The Spenserians of *Adonais*, taking some liberties, attain, at their best, absolute perfection , of the octosyllabic couplets, shortened or not in several minor poems, almost as much may be said , and the octaves of *The Witch of Atlas* (with the very best of Keats's *Isabella*) are the greatest examples of that metre in English for serious use   He even tries the often failed-in *terza rima*, and does beautiful things in it, though perhaps not such beautiful examples of it

His lyrics.   But it is in his lyrics that Shelley's prosodic, like his poetic, power shows highest   Those in *Prometheus Unbound* have been spoken of , but the numerous and glorious short and separate pieces defy enumeration or specification here.   The two popular favourites, "The Cloud" and "The Skylark," would each serve as a text for an exemplary lecture on English prosody, and a dozen others, with dozens more added to them, would do the same None is ever really "irregular"   to say, as has been said of "The Cloud," that it defies ordinary scansion, is simply *to say that the speaker does not understand either the* poem or ordinary scansion, or both (see above, Book I p 100)   But almost all exhibit, in endless variety of relief and colour, the great laws of equivalence and substitution, and the enormous advantage of varied and even complicated metre, rhyme, line-length, and stanza-arrangement.

Shelley never seems to have studied metre much, and, as has been said, his first pattern is the merest starting-point for him. But he touches none that he does not adorn ; none that he does not make matter of delight , and none, likewise, in which he does not supply a text for infinite technical instruction as well

The case of Keats is curiously different. He too—as indeed practically everybody does—begins with imitation, but it is imitation of a different kind. Chapman, Spenser, the sonneteers, the Jacobean poets probably, Leigh Hunt certainly, supply him not merely with hints and " send-offs," but with carefully studied models   He hits, in conse-quence, first in his *Juvenilia* and then in *Endymion*, upon a very much enjambed form of decasyllabic couplet—a form opposed to all the traditions of Pope, and deemed horrible by the orthodox critics of the day   But he sees for himself the defect of this, and applies himself earnestly to the study of Dryden and Milton as tonics and astringents The results are the fine, less fluent, still slightly overrun, but tripleted and Alexandrined heroics of *Lamia*, and the splendid blank verse of *Hyperion*   But he has not confined himself to these, or to their lessons , and he has never confined himself to the mere lessons of any poet or of any period   He produces in turn the touching octaves of *Isabella* , the magnificent Spenserians of *The Eve of St Agnes* , the Sonnets, most of them among the finest ex-amples of the form in English , the varied stanza-measures of the Odes , the unique ballad adaptation [1] of *La Belle*

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[1] With ''long measure,' but with the last line cut down to a mono-meter

O ' what | can ail | thee, knight | at-arms,
Alone | and pale|ly loi|tering ?
The sedge | has with|ered from | the lake,
And no | birds sing

This last line being sometimes exquisitely equivalenced in the first foot :

$$\cup \quad \cup \quad - \quad / \quad \cup \quad -$$
And her eyes | were wild

$$\cup \quad \cup \quad -$$
On the cold | hill side

Dame sans Merci, and lastly, two forms of octosyllabic couplet—the mainly catalectic or seven-syllabled form of some earlier poems, and the complete one of *The Eve of St. Mark*, which overleaps all other examples back to Gower, picks out the finest qualities of Gower's own form, and rearranges them in an example unfinished in itself, but serving as a guide, in the production of a great body of finished and admirable work, to the late Mr William Morris   In no poet is the lesson — which it was the business of this generation to exemplify, and should be of this chapter to expound—of ordered variety, in foot, in line, in stanza, more triumphantly shown.

Tennyson at once and in Browning—the one born just
before, the other just after, the end of the first decade
of the nineteenth century—it manifests itself in the most
unmistakable degree , so much so, indeed, as to have
actually puzzled, if not shocked, Coleridge himself, the
greatest restorer of its mainspring   Tennyson's first
volumes are open to many just criticisms. But if the
student will turn to the scanned examples of the " Holly
hock Song " and the " Dying Swan " given previously,
he will see that the young poet, so far from having " begun
to write without knowing very well what metre is," had
begun with an almost absolutely perfect knowledge of
it, whatever his shortcomings in other matters might be.[1]

Tennyson
himself   The variety of metres in which this accomplishment
was shown was extraordinary, and was no doubt felt by
contemporaries to be bewildering   Even from the poets
of the first Romantic school they had been principally
(though of course not entirely) accustomed to lines of the
same length, couched in more or less uniform metre
throughout   The pieces which composed the two volumes
of 1830 and 1832, even before they were revised and
augmented in 1842, contained a greater variety of metres
than had been seen in the same bulk of work of any
single English poet from Chaucer to Keats   There was
blank verse, if not at first quite of the absolute perfection
which it reached ten years later, of a new and remarkable
pattern, adjusting the Miltonic paragraph to a much more
fluent movement, and quite discarding the Thomsonian

And not | a sor|row
Hang a|ny tear | on your | eyelash|es ,
Lie still | and deep,
Sad soul, | until | the sea-|wave wash|es
ᴗ ᴗ – ᴗ –
The rim | o' the sun | to-mor|row
In east|ern sky   (BEDDOES)

The redundant syllables are specially marked off here, to bring out
their contrast with the acatalectic lines

[1] Macaulay's prosody is mostly plain sailing , but in *The Last Buc-
caneer* he has (perhaps following Moore) attempted a rather unusual
rhythm. See *Hist Pros* iii 135-137   For Praed *v sup* p 14

stiffness   There were Spenserians (in the opening of the
" Lotos-Eaters ") of the very best kind   There was a little
very fine decasyllabic couplet   But the great majority of the
poems were lyrics, couched in a dazzling variety of metres.
It was not only that the poet expanded the apparent but
not real "irregularity" of Shakespeare into examples such
as the two noted above   It was not merely that, as in the
" Lotos-Eaters " itself and " The Vision of Sin,"[1] he ar-
ranged different metres in the same piece on the principles
of an elaborate musical symphony   The way in which he
handled metres previously known must have startled—in-
deed we know that it did startle—the precisians still more

A good instance of this is the threefold rehandling of
the old decasyllabic quatrain, familiar to everybody from
Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* and Gray's *Elegy*   This quatrain
itself, as a consequence of its gravity, is rather apt to be
monotonous   Simple shortening of the even verses gives
rather better outline, but not much less—in fact even
greater—monotony   In three different poems Tennyson
handles it in three different ways   " The Poet "[2] is
couched in 10, 6, 10, 4, giving a succinct and rather
sententious metre, which suits admirably for the sharply
cut cumulative phrases of that fine piece   But, by this
shortening, ten syllables, the equivalent of a whole line,
were lost, and this gave too little room for description,
and especially for the series of pictures, in scene- or figure-
painting, which form so large a part of the other two poems
and communicate to them such extraordinary charm   So,
in the " Palace of Art," Tennyson "eked" the stanza,
extending the second line to eights and the fifth to sixes.[3]

*Special ex
ample of
his manipu
lation of the
quatrain*

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[1] This did not appear till 1842

[2] The poet in a golden clime was born,
    With golden stars above ,
  Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
    The love of love

[3] I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
    Wherein at ease for aye to dwell
  I said, " O Soul, make merry and carouse,
    Dear soul, for all is well "

P

This, besides actually giving a little more room, admits more varied "fingering," together with an effect of outline, which is wonderfully attractive—a taper, but with a swell in it   In the "Dream of Fair Women"—more narrative and with larger aims—he wanted more space still, and a form that would link itself better.   He gets this by keeping *three* decasyllables with a final six[1]   This is an exceedingly cunning as well as beautiful device, for, on the one hand, the large majority of decasyllables, batched in threes, assists the narrative effect, which is always hard to achieve with stanzas of very irregular outline , and, on the other, the short final line serves at once as finial to the individual stanza, and hinge to join it to the next

Many examples could be given, and may be found in the larger *History*, but these will suffice, with the addition that Tennyson continued his experimentation to the very last, as in the remarkable metre of "Kapiolani," and that his handling of blank verse, like Shakespeare, became almost perilous in its freedom, by the temptation that it offered to others to traverse the bounds, though he himself never actually did so

Browning   Browning, who was to illustrate the prosodic lesson of the century with, if possible, an even greater variety, did not exactly begin in that direction ; though his prosodic practice was almost equally independent after the very first   That "very first"—*Pauline*—showed a distinct effort to imitate the blank verse of Shelley , and this was continued, though with more idiosyncrasy, in the dramatically arranged, but not really dramatic, *Paracelsus*, which had, however, one or two beautiful lyrics of a kind also to some extent Shelleyan   The blank verse in these two is not much equivalenced, nor even very much enjambed, but it runs with a peculiar *breathlessness* from verse to verse, even if each be fairly complete in itself   And this breathlessness continues—being, indeed, the main

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[1] I read, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
     The Legend of Good Women, long ago
   Sung by the morning star of song, who made
     His music heard below.

source of the much-talked-of " obscurity " of the piece—
in *Sordello*   Here the couplet used is utterly opposed to
that of the eighteenth century , but, once more, it is by
no means the enjambed variety of the seventeenth.   It is
almost a kind to itself, progressing in immense involved
paragraphs (often largely parenthetic) after a fashion which
almost drowns the rhyme, even if there be definite stops
at the end of the verses

Fortunately, after this, in *Bells and Pomegranates*, he
devoted a large part of his attention to lyric, in which he
produced examples exquisite in quality and inexhaustible
in variety [1]   His octosyllables in *Christmas Eve* and

---

[1] A few examples may be given —

(1) Oh ‖ heart ' oh ! | blood that | freezes, | blood that | burns '
         Earth s re|turns
    For whole | centu|ries of | folly, | noise, and | sin '
         Shut them | in
    With their | triumphs ⌈ and their ⌈ glories, | and the | rest ,
         Love is | best

                                             (*Love among the Ruins*)

(Regular trochees alternately trimeter and monometer, but both cata-
lectic   *One* monosyllabic substitution)

    (2) What hand and brain went ever paired ?
         What heart alike conceived and dared ?
         What act proved all its thought had been ?
         What will but felt the fleshly screen ?
           We ride | and I see | her bosom heave
         There s ma|ny a crown | for who can reach.
         Ten lines, a statesman s life in each !
         The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
         A soldier's doing ' what atones ?
         They scratch his name | on the Ab|bey stones
           My ri|ding is bet|ter, by their leave

                                             (*The Last Ride Together*)

(Iambic dimeter stanza , three or four trisyllabic substitutions)

    (3) Oh | what a dawn | of day '
         How the March | sun feels | like May '
              All is blue | again
              After last | night s rain,
         And the South | dries the haw 'thorn spray
              On|ly, my Love s | away '
         I'd as lief | that the blue | were grey

(Iambic-anapæstic with monosyllabic feet admitted into partnership)

Easter Day are daringly equivalenced, and rhymed still more daringly, but very effective, and much later, in *Fifine at the Fair*, he almost succeeded in making the continuous Alexandrine a real success But the bulk of his immense work in later days was written in blank verse, as strongly equivalenced as his octosyllables Browning was never an incorrect prosodist, even his rhymes, though frequently extravagant, are almost always defensible, and it is a vulgar error to think him even rough in verse, though he was so in diction But he, once more, pushed the lesson of variety to its extreme in one way

Mrs
Browning His wife, both before and after she became his wife, give a third important example of this attention to lyric, and this determination to give it the most multitudinous and original forms She had one unfortunate, and indeed disgusting, prosodic defect — a toleration of, if not a positive preference for, really atrocious rhymes But her ear for metre was quite differently tuned, and often exquisite, though (as was *not* the case with her husband) her bad rhymes, and, as was the case with him, though in a different way, her extravagant diction, sometimes created a false idea of metrical carelessness

Matthew
Arnold But, in a way, the most remarkable witness to the general tendency of the period was to be found in Mr Matthew Arnold, who disapproved of Tennyson, and must (though personal friendship seems to have prevented him from saying so) have disapproved of the Brownings still more For all Mr Arnold's "classical" tastes, in different senses of that word, he became "romantic" in his variety of lyric forms, in his handling of them, in his dealing with the

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(4) Is all | our fire | of ship|wreck wood,
     Oak and | pine?
     Oh, for | the ills | half-un|derstood,
     The dim | dead woe |
     Long a|go
     Befallen | this bit|ter coast | of France !
     Well, poor | sailors | took their | chance
     I take | mine

(Iambic-trochaic, or, if monosyllabic initial feet be granted in some lines, all iambic, and perhaps better so)

couplet, and in the adoption of elaborate stanza forms for
his longer poems   Only his blank verse is of somewhat
classical pattern, and of this he did not write very much

In the poets who specially represent the last half of the Later poets
nineteenth century (with, in one case and the chief of all, an —The
actual extension over nearly the whole of the first decade Rossettis.
of the twentieth)—and who consisted mainly of the school
often, though not very accurately, called Pre Raphaelite—
these tendencies are exhibited to a still greater extent,
and in some cases, beyond all doubt, consciously followed
and elaborated   In Dante and Christina Rossetti, brother
and sister — more remarkable for genius perhaps than
any brother and sister in history, literary or other,—but
especially in the brother, the Italian and English elements
blended   Dante showed, though in great variety, more of
the Italian tendency to slow and stately music , Christina,
more of the English to light and rapid movement as well.
But both thoroughly mastered the secrets of equivalence,
as well as those of largely broken and variegated line-
length and stanza-arrangement   The sonnets of both are
the finest, on what is called the Italian model, in our
language, and Christina's command, both of simple song
metres and of regular short verse—almost Skeltonic in
apparent character, but far apart from doggerel—is speci-
ally noticeable   She is indeed one of the most daring
of experimenters in metrical licence, but, even more than
Browning's, her verse, with all its audacity, never trans-
gresses the laws of prosodic music [1]

> [1]   (a) Morning | and eve|ning
>   Maids heard | the gob|lins cry
>   " Come buy | our or|chard fruits,
>   Come buy, | come buy
>   Apples and | quinces,
>   Lemons and | oranges,
>   Plump unpecked | cherries,
>   Melons and | rasberries "

(Where, as almost always, the dactylic lines can be made anapæstic
with anacrusis, " Mel|ons and rasp|berries," etc)

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[*] (a) Iamb and trochee followed by dactyl and trochee

Earlier to appear than Rossetti, except in little-read periodicals, but a younger man, was William Morris, whose

(*b*) She clipped | a pre|cious gold|en lock,
　　　She dropped | a tear | more rare | than pearl,
　　　Then sucked | their fruit | globes fair | or red
　　　Sweeter | than hon|ey from | the rock,
　　　Stronger | than man-|rejoic|ing wine,
　　　Clearer | than wa|ter flowed | that juice

(*c*) But ev|er in | the noon|light
　　　She pined | and pined | away ,
　　　Sought them | by night | and day,
　　　Found them | no more, | but dwin|dled and | grew grey ,
　　　Then fell | with the | first snow,
　　　While to | this day | no grass | will grow
　　　Where she | lies low
　　　I plant|ed dai|sies there | a year | ago
　　　That nev|er blow.

(*d*) Laughed every | goblin
　　　When they | spied her | peeping
　　　Came towards her | hobbling,
　　　Flying | running, | leaping, |
　　　Puffing and | blowing

(2) Where sun|less riv|ers weep　　　Led by | a sin|gle star,
　　Their waves | into | the deep,　　She came | from ver|y far,
　　She sleeps | a charm|ed sleep　　To seek, | where sha|dows are,
　　　Awake | her not　　　　　　　Her plea|sant lot

(3) Come to | me in | the si|lence of | the night ,
　　　Come in | the speak|ing si|lence of | a dream ,
　　Come with | soft round|ed cheeks | and eyes | as bright
　　　As sun|light on | a stream ,
　　　　Come back | in tears,
　　O mem|ory, | hope, love, | of fin|ished years

(4) One by one | slowly,　　　　Clear stainless | spirits,
　　　Ah | how sad | and slow !　　　White, as | white as | snow ,
　　Wailing and | praying　　　　Pale spirits, | wailing
　　The spir|its rise | and go　　　For an | over|throw

(5) "Oh ! whence | do you come,|| my de|ar friend, | to me ?
　　With your gold|en hair || all fallen | below | your knee,

(*b*) Pure iambic dimeter with a trochee or two
(*c*) Iambic, with length varied from two to five feet
(*d*) Dactyl and trochee, or mere trochee
(2) Iambic　　　　　　　(3) Iambic, with some trochaic beginnings
(4) Dactylic-trochaic and iambic alternately
(5) Really " irregular "　Norm dimeter anapæstic—
　　　　　　∪ ∪ − ∪ ∪ − ∪ ∪ − ∪ ∪ −
but largely varied in rhythm and length.　Best scanned as above, with strong pause, making *five* feet

place in the history of English prosody is a very important one.   In his first book, *The Defence of Guenevere*, he tried, with remarkable success, a very large number of lyrical metres, sometimes exhibiting great originality of substitution He passed from this to a still more remarkable revival of the enjambed decasyllabic couplet in *The Life and Death of Jason* and part of *The Earthly Paradise*, following not so much Keats as the best of the early seventeenth-century examples   With this, in *The Earthly Paradise* itself, he combined octosyllabic couplet of almost more exceptional quality still—very little equivalenced, but varied by pause and fingering in a manner which only Gower in his very finest passage, and Keats in the fragment of the *Eve of St Mark*, had achieved   He also wrote excellent rhyme-royal In *Love is Enough*, besides many more beautiful lyrical devices, he endeavoured a sort of alliterative semi-metrical rhythm of fifteenth-century kind, which has not pleased every one, but in *Sigurd the Volsung*, while still hovering about the same period, he pitched upon one of the numerous arrangements of the fourteener and perfected it into a thoroughly great metre [1]

Although not an artist in quite so many kinds of verse as Morris, and confining himself as a rule to strict metre, Algernon Charles Swinburne was, however, by far the greatest metrist of this group and time, and one of the greatest in the history of English poetry.   In his copious critical work he did not bestow much explicit attention on matters prosodic , but when he did, made important remarks, and once gave one of the most important to be found definitely expressed by any English poet.   This was

And your face | as white || as snow|drops on | the lea,
And your voice | as hol||low as | the hol|low sea ? "

(This last extract is a most audacious, but quite justifiable, fingering of the ordinary five-foot iambic line, with substitutions and adaptations which give it now anapæstic, now trochaic undertone   The first exhibits, in a batch of five from *Goblin Market*, the same audacity and the same success in varying line-*length* as well as constitution , (2), (3), and (4), with more of what is commonly called " regularity,' show the same various address)

[1] For examples of Morris's prosody see Scanned Conspectus.

to the effect, that English would always lend itself readily
and successfully to any combinations of iamb, trochee, or
anapæst, never to those of dactyl and spondee   He him-
self produced magnificent verse which looks like dactylic
hexameter or elegiac, but is really (and was meant by him
for) anapæstic work with anacrusis and catalexis   He
wrote beautiful choriambics and more beautiful Sapphics
But these, at least the last two, were merely experiments
and *tours de force*   He also experimented in the artificial
French forms *(v inf)*   But his principal work was straight-
forward composition in the direct lines of the English
poetical inheritance, utilising to the utmost all the liberties
of equivalence and substitution on the principles of Tenny-
son, but never abusing them, and informing particular metres
with a spirit that made them entirely his own   His blank
verse, though sometimes exceedingly fine, was also some-
times a little too voluble , and of his couplets much the
same may be said in both ways   But in lyric—giving that
word the widest possible extension—he is unsurpassed as
to variety and individuality of practice, while, in two striking
cases, he made improvements of the most remarkable kind
on previous improvements made by others [1]

[1] Examples of lyric

(1) You have cho|sen and clung | to the chance | they sent | you
    Life sweet | as per|fume, and pure | as prayer ,
    But will | it not one | day in heav|en repent | you ?
    Will they sol|ace you whol|ly, the days | that were ?
    Will you lift | up your eyes | between sad|ness and bliss ?
    Meet mine | and see | where the great | love is,
    And trem|ble and turn | and be changed ? | Content | you,
    The gate | is strait , | I shall not | be there

(Anapæstic dimeter with iambic substitution and redundance   A most
perfect combination)

            (2) If love | were what | the rose | is
                And I | were like | the leaf,
                Our lives | would grow | togeth|er
                In sad | or sing|ing wea|ther,
                Blown fields | or flower|ful clo|ses,
                Green plea|sure or | grey grief
                If love | were what | the rose | is
                And I | were like | the leaf

(Pure iambics   Dimeter catalectic and brachycatalectic by turns)

The first of these was the fresh adaptation (after Fitz-Gerald, but with an important difference) of the decasyllabic quatrain in *Laus Veneris*   The translator of *Omar Khayyam* had, with great effect, made the first, second, and fourth lines rhyme together, leaving the third entirely blank   Mr Swinburne made the third line of each of his pairs of quatrains rhyme as well, a completion of the music which has a very fine effect   And a still greater achievement was the shortening of the last line of the "Praed Metre," which makes one of the most beautiful arrangements to be found in English   But it is perhaps only in these two that even guidance of any definite kind can be assigned   For the most part the prosodic effect is produced by original extension of the general laws, and by entirely individual fingering of particular metres   Nothing in the whole range of English poetry is more remarkable than the handling, in this way, of the ordinary Long Measure with alternate redundance in "At a Month's End ",[1] and the examples of other varied metres, also given below, will complete the exposition, as far as it can be done in anything but a monograph of great extent

Many poets, in the later years of the nineteenth cen- Others
tury, have been remarkable for prosodic accomplishment ,
but, except in the outside department of experiment in
quantitative and classical metres, they have rarely touched
principle   Arthur E O'Shaughnessy [2] and James Thomson

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(3) When the | game be|gan be|tween them | for a | jest,
  He played | king and | she played | queen to | match the | best
  Laughter | soft as | tears, and | tears that | turned to | laughter,
  These were | things she | sought for | years and | sorrowed | after

(Trochaic trimeter catalectic , quite pure throughout)

   [1] As a | star feels | the sun | and fal|ters,
      Touched to | death by | divin|er eyes—
    As on | the old gods' | untend|ed altars
      The old fire | of with|ered wor|ship dies

("Long measure ", but completely transfigured by the redundance and double rhyme in the odd places, and the trochaic and anapæstic substitution)

     [2] We | are the mu|sic-mak|ers,
       And we | are the dream|ers of dreams,

the Second showed extraordinary proficiency, the first in
the more rapid, the second in the statelier variation of
metre   Canon Dixon, who was sometimes extremely happy
in lyric,[1] wrote, in *Mano*, the one long English poem in

> Wan|dering by lone | sea break|ers,
> And sit|ting by de|solate streams
> World-los|ers and world-|forsakers,
> On whom | the pale | moon gleams ,
> For we | are the mov|ers and shak|ers
> Of the world | for ev|er, it seems

(Anapæsts used with singular skill)

The stars are dimly seen among the shadows of the bay,
And lights that win are seen in strife with lights that die away

The wave is very still—the rudder loosens in our hand ,
The zephyr will not fill our sail, and waft us to the land ,
O precious is the pause between the winds that come and go,
And sweet the silence of the shores between the ebb and flow

  •   •   •   •   •

Say, shall we sing of day or night, fair land or mighty ocean,
Of any rapturous delight or any dear emotion,
Of any joy that is on earth, or hope that is above,
The holy country of our birth, or any song of love ?

  •   •   •   •   •

Our heart in all our life is like the hand of one who steers
A bark upon an ocean rife with dangers and with fears
The joys, the hopes, like waves or wings, bear up this life of ours—
Short as a song of all these things that make up all its hours

(The old fourteener—but made almost new by the great variation of
pause, by occasional redundance, and by the grouping of the lines)

> [1] If ev|er thou | didst creep
> From out | the world | of sleep,
> When the sun | slips | and the moon | dips,
> If ev|er thou | wast born ,
> Or upon | the starv|ing lips
> Of the gray | uncol|oured morn

(Especial effect produced by the anapæsts and monosyllabic feet of
line 3)

> Thou go|est more | and more
> To the sil|ent things | thy hair | is hoar,
> Emp|tier thy wear|y face | like to | the shore
> Far ru|ined, and | the deso|late bil|low white
> That recedes | and leaves | it waif-wrin|kled, gap-|rocked, weak
> The shore | and the bil|low white
> Groan|—they cry | and rest | not   they | would speak
> And call | the eter|nal Night

terza rima, but without removing the objections which seem to hold, in our language, against the arrangement that is so magnificent in the *Divina Commedia*. In the late 'seventies a fancy came in, and remained for some time, of reviving the artificial French (and to some extent English) metres of the fifteenth and earlier centuries— ballades, rondeaux, triolets, etc Mr George Meredith, when he employed verse and not prose, used a considerable number of odd measures unusually rhythmed, as well as others perfectly adjusted to the demands of the ear. Mr. Henley and others carried on the rhymeless revival from Mr Arnold, and yet others, such as the late Mr John Davidson, while using rhyme reviled it A few attempts have recently been made at "*stress*-metres "—rebellious to any uniform system of scansion, even with full liberty of substitution, and, in fact, irregularly rhythmed prose But nothing really good and unquestionably poetic has been produced which will not obey the principles set forth in this treatise, and everything really good has furnished fresh illustrations of them [1]

To cease | them for ev|er, bid|ding new | things is|sue
From her | cold tis|sue
Night | that is ev|er young, | nor knows | decay,
Though old|er by | eter|nity | than they

(Very fine "modern Pindaric," with extremely well-managed substitution)

[1] For some supposed exceptions *v sup* last section of Scanned Conspectus, pp 128 130 One of the most interesting things in the study of prosody is the tracing of the history of lyric forms Examples have been given above, and more will be found below , but *completeness* is here again impossible Again, also, the "principles," properly followed out, will carry the student safely through all such investigations, as, for instance, that into the connection of Mr Swinburne's "Anima Anceps" with Curran s "Deserter,' and the entire pedigree of both Perhaps it may be well to add that, where a choriambic effect occurs ($- \smile \smile -$), choice is often, if not always, open between scansion as trochee and iamb or as monosyllabic foot and anapæst This has been already indicated expressly in some examples See, especially, pp 183, 184, 212

CHAPTER VII

I OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

PROSODY rhythmical, not metrical, determined exclusively by alliteration and accent Combinations of accented and unaccented syllables perhaps classifiable, but seldom, if ever, reducible to any combination corresponding to the flow of later Middle and Modern English verse, though the *principle* (of syllabic irregularity in corresponding lines) *survives as the most important basis of that verse itself* Rhyme, except in the piece specially entitled "Rhyming Poem" and other very late examples, practically non-existent, the instances collected from other places being very few and quite possibly accidental.

II BEFORE OR VERY SOON AFTER 1200

Earliest Middle English Period

No pure and unmixed alliterative-accentual verse of the old kind, but a choice between pure syllabic metre of iambic type (*Ormulum*), less regular but clearly metrical (*i e* "*foot*-measured ") verse, iambic or trochaic (*Paternoster, Moral Ode*, etc), and singular mixtures of the alliterative kind (badly done), and the metrical kind (sometimes done rather better) (*Layamon, Proverbs of Alfred*)

III. MIDDLE AND LATER THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Second Early Middle English Period

The metrifying process going on, with stronger emphasis-ing of the metrical character and almost complete discard-ing of the alliterative (*King Horn*, late in the century, has sometimes been claimed as an exception, but without good reason)   Definite forms emerge   the two great kinds of octosyllabic couplet—more strictly *syllabic* (*Owl and Nightingale*), or less so (*Genesis and Exodus*) , the fifteener-fourteener or seven-foot iambic (*Robert of Gloucester*) , the *rime couée* or " Romance-six " (*Proverbs of Hendyng*)   Of *pure alliterative verse there is no trace whatever.*

IV   EARLIER FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Central Period of Middle English.

The metrical development attains complete predomin-ance in the *Romances* (chiefly octosyllabic couplet or " Romance-six "), and in lyrics such as those of the Harleian MS 2253   In both there is considerable *equivalence,* or substitution of trisyllabic (and perhaps also monosyllabic) for dissyllabic feet   The fourteener begins to break itself down into the ballad measure of eight and six, with or without full alternate rhyme   Decasyllabic couplet appears (as it had done even earlier) sporadically. But at an uncertain time—probably about the second third of the century—alliteration again makes its appearance, sometimes alone (*William of Palerne*), sometimes in com-pany with some rhyme-arrangement (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*) , and the two methods continue side by side (though with the alliteration always in the minority and seldom quite pure) for the best part of two hundred years, till well within the sixteenth century itself.

V. Later Fourteenth Century

Crowning Period of Middle English

The tendencies already indicated, and shown after 1350 by Laurence Minot, the writers in the Vernon MS , and others, culminate in three remarkable poets—Langland, Gower, and Chaucer   The first, who is probably the oldest (though the most plausible theory of his work puts it in stages from the sixth or seventh to the last decade of the century), eschews rhyme altogether, and (as far as he can, but not entirely) declines metrical form —preferring a modernised Old English line, strongly middle-paused, and regularly, but not lavishly, alliterated   Gower, with a little rhyme-royal, employs elsewhere, throughout his voluminous English work, octosyllabic couplet, nearer to the French or strictly syllabic norm than that of any other Middle English writer, though with some tell-tale approaches to variety   Chaucer, between the two, represents the true development of English prosody proper   He practises, from the (disputed) *Romaunt of the Rose*, to the (certain) *House of Fame*, the octosyllabic couplet ; varies it remarkably and consciously , and gets from it effects excellent in their way, but never, apparently, quite satisfactory to himself   He adopts or imitates from the French, besides minor forms, the great rhyme-royal or *Troilus* stanza   He has, in his prose, curious "shadows before " of blank verse   But his greatest metrical achievement is the taking up—whether wholly from French or with some consciousness of earlier sporadic attempts in English is disputed, but certainly in the perhaps unconscious line of those attempts—the decasyllabic or heroic couplet, which is first the sole vehicle of his *Legend of Good Women*, and secondly the main vehicle of *The Canterbury Tales*

VI Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries

The Decadence of Middle English Prosody

The prosodic accomplishment of Chaucer, while representing all that Middle English was capable of attaining, represented more than it was capable of maintaining. His followers in Middle Scots, employing not the actual vernacular, but a "made" literary language, carried out his lessons for some time with great success. But those in Southern English appear to have—except in more or less pure folk-poems—succumbed partly to influences of change in pronunciation (which are very imperfectly understood, though the disuse of the final valued *e* is the certain and central fact), partly to a loss of understanding (which is still more obscure in its nature and causes) of the metres themselves. From Lydgate to Hawes, rhyme-royal most of all, decasyllabic couplet (not so often tried) hardly less, and octosyllabic to a somewhat minor degree, exhibit the most painful irregularity, clumsiness, and prosaic effect, there being sometimes no regular rhythm, and nothing at all but the rhyme to give a poetical character to the composition. The "doggerel" of Skelton is a pretty obvious attempt to escape from this. Only ballad, carol, and the like seem to escape the curse.

VII Mid-Sixteenth Century

The Recovery of Rhythm

In the second quarter of the sixteenth century attention seems to have been drawn to the "staggering state" of prosody, by the end of that quarter, or a very little later, we know from positive evidence that it was theoretically felt. But much earlier Sir Thomas Wyatt, and, in his tracks, Henry Howard, Lord Surrey, expressed the fact practically by their imitations of Italian forms. Both tried the sonnet ; Wyatt attempted, with little success, *terza rima* ; and Surrey,

with more, tried blank verse. The regular quantification or accentuation necessary for the reproduction of these forms evidently gave them (and Wyatt more particularly and naturally, as the pioneer) a great deal of trouble, but they managed it—if not universally or perfectly—somehow, and they kept the practice up in lyric measures less strictly imitated   They also popularised—if they did not introduce —a new combination-variation of the old long lines into the so-called " poulter's measure " or couplet of twelve-fourteen syllables, easily breaking down into six, six, eight, six   Their example was followed by many poets between 1550 and 1580, iambic regularity establishing itself rather at the expense of poetic variety, but with an immense gain to the ear   A very important, though not in itself very poetical, development was also made in the regular anapæstics of Tusser, and the drama, taking up at last Surrey's blank verse, in the meantime experimented with all sorts of forms, regular and doggerel

VIII   Late Sixteenth Century

The Perfecting of Metre and of Poetical Diction.

This invaluable if not always very stimulating period of drill and discipline (in which Wyatt and Surrey themselves, with Sackville later, are the chief and almost the only poets who transcend experiment) passes, a little before 1580, into one of complete poetic and proportionately complete prosodic accomplishment, with Spenser and his companions and followers for non-dramatic poetry, with Peele and Marlowe preluding Shakespeare in dramatic blank verse The greatest pioneer, one who not only explores but attains, is Spenser, and he, after presenting in the *Shepherd's Calendar* the most remarkable record of experiment in the history of English poetic form, proceeds to the perfect structure and exquisite diction of the *Faerie Queene*   He, however, hardly touches blank verse, and, after the *Calendar*, eschews the lighter lyric.   But both these are

taken up by others, and while lyric attains all but the highest possible stage of that diversity in harmony which is especially required by it, the possibilities of blank verse are more than suggested in Shakespeare's predecessors, and are, in the dramatic range, exhausted by Shakespeare himself Outside the drama, however, and blank verse, the abiding fear of doggerel keeps back the due development of regularised substitution   verse is mostly iambic   But here also Shakespeare pierces the heart of the mystery, and the songs in his plays are as prosodically complete as his blank verse itself   There is much practice in sonnet, and, towards the end of the century, "riding rhyme" or heroic couplet, which had fallen into some disuse, is revived, chiefly for satiric or semi-satiric purposes (as by Spenser in *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, by Hall, Donne, and Marston in their definite satires, etc, and for "history" by Drayton

IX   EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The further Development of Lyric, Stanza, and Blank Verse Insurgence and Division of the Couplet.

Between the latest years of the sixteenth and the earliest of the seventeenth century there is naturally little difference, but the total transformation is rather rapid   Blank verse no sooner attains its absolute perfection in Shakespeare than it begins to show signs of overripeness, in the great tendency to redundance which even he shares in his latest plays, and which distinguishes Beaumont and Fletcher   Stanza does not, after the similar consummateness of Spenser, show a similar formal decline, but there arises a distaste for it.   Only lyric perseveres in practically full flourishing, and even exhibits a certain further quintessence of beauty, though some loss of strength   Meanwhile, the decasyllabic couplet revives in a complicated fashion   It does not yet make much recovery of drama, but is very largely practised by Drayton, is declared (at least on Drummond's authority)

to be "the bravest sort of verse" by Jonson, and made, towards the end of James the First's reign, the subject of a formal critical-poetical encomium by Sir John Beaumont But it is a house divided against itself, and it is not till the "stopped" form (in which the rhymes sharply punctuate the sense) conquers the "enjambed" (which in *this* sub-period is the favourite) that it attains complete popular favour

X. MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Milton

The period, or sub-period, which may be called "mid-seventeenth century," on one side continues the developments described in the last section, and on another begins those which will be described in the next   But it contains almost the whole work of Milton, who belongs in one sense to both, in another to neither   If he had written no blank verse, he would still be of the first rank as a practical prosodist, in virtue of his stanza-forms, such as that in the "Hymn on the Nativity", of his remarkably varied octosyllabic couplet in *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, and *Comus*, of the almost unique strophes, with irregular rhyme, in *Lycidas*, of the *Sonnets*, adjusted not to the Elizabethan-English, but to the commoner Italian forms, and of the peculiar choric arrangements of *Samson Agonistes*   But it is undoubtedly as the introducer of blank verse for general poetic practice, and as the modulator of that verse in the directions previously described, that he stands as one of the very greatest masters of English prosody   For, on the one hand, he rescues "blanks" from the chaos into which, by the laches of the dramatists, they were falling, and, on the other, he establishes for ever (though it may sometimes be mistaken by individuals and periods) the principle of foot-equivalence and substitution in the individual line, with that of combination of several lines into a verse-paragraph

XI The Later Seventeenth Century

Dryden.

For the moment, however, the work of Milton produces no effect, and though Dryden, his younger contemporary, uses, with great effect, a large variety of metres, his main importance, in the general history of prosody, consists in the establishment of the stopped heroic couplet as at once the most popular and the most dignified of English metres. But he does not at once make it into the strictly deca-syllabic, strictly middle-paused kind which dominates the following century   On the initiation (partly at least) of Cowley, he varies it with the Alexandrine, which he sometimes includes in a triplet, while the same extension to three similarly rhymed lines, in decasyllable only, is still more frequent   If he does not exactly introduce, he popularises and for a time maintains, the same couplet in drama, but uses it most successfully in satiric and didactic verse, of extraordinary weight and vigour, while entirely destitute of monotony.   He himself and his minor but more lyrical contemporaries, Rochester, Sedley, Afra Behn, etc, continue the older Caroline tradition of song in varied measures, but it dies out.   On the other hand, his practice (suggested, doubtless, by Davenant's *Gondibert*) of the decasyllabic quatrain, and the majestic if not fully Pindaric strophes of his *Odes,* supply models which serve to vary the unbroken prevalence of the couplet, and are followed by Gray and others, during the succeeding century, with exceptionally fine results.

XII The Eighteenth Century

The summary of the history of eighteenth-century prosody has been foreshadowed in the above lines. Addison, Garth, and others follow Dryden , and Pope further " corrects " him in a couplet which becomes polished to the extreme, but, when handled without almost

supreme genius, is distinctly monotonous   And this couplet, with almost complete and definite acceptance by theorists and little overt protest on the part of practitioners, assumes the position of premier metre in English for long poems, continuing to hold it throughout the hundred years. Lyric, too, confines itself to relatively few forms, chiefly iambic—the "common" and "long" measure, the Romance-six, the decasyllabic quatrain, the regular or irregular Pindaric ode   There are, however, certain privileged exceptions to the uniformity   Two poets not in their first youth at the beginning of the century—Prior and Swift—secure a position for the light octosyllable and for anapæstic measures, Gray and Collins raise the ode, Thomson—preceded by one or two minor poets, and followed by a considerable number, some of whom are not so minor—takes up "the manner of Milton," that is to say, blank verse   Even in the first half of the century Shenstone timidly pleads for trisyllabic substitution, while in the second half Chatterton and Blake boldly practise it, and that study of old (and especially ballad) English verse, of which Percy's *Reliques* is the central example, slowly but surely leads the way to a restoration of its principles.

XIII   THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY AND THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL

In no department of poetic practice does the great Romantic revival, after forerunnings in Chatterton and Blake, show itself, in the latest years of the eighteenth century, and the earliest of the nineteenth, more perceptibly than in that of prosody   Only one of its masters —Wordsworth—slights this revival in theory, while he is not of the first mark in practice   But Coleridge, in *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, restores and perfects equivalence on a doubtful principle, but with consummate practical effect.   Southey, less effective practically, is both sounder and more ŏriginal in theory, Scott takes up

Coleridge's example in all his verse-romances, and completely vindicates the freedom of lyric, Byron, affecting admiration of the couplet, achieves his own best work in Coleridge-Scott octosyllables, in Spenserians, in octaves, and in lyric, Shelley pushes the various and unfettered lyrical movement to its almost inconceivable farthest, and Keats revives (after Leigh Hunt) the enjambed couplet in decasyllable, recovers an octosyllabic form unknown since Gower and only partially utilised by him, writes exquisite Spenserians and beautiful octaves, comes perhaps nearest Milton in blank verse and nearest Dryden in the other kind of couplet, and achieves forms of ode, classical and Romantic, of astonishing flexibility and charm   By and in these, and in many minors from Moore downwards, the freedom of prosody, and the great instrument of that freedom, the equivalenced foot, are championed and practised with almost all the variety possible

XIV   THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

The process of varying and extending the forms of prosody, by the special instrument above noticed and others, and under the direction of a general effort to give those forms a wider visual and audible appeal to the mind's senses, continues in the two later groups or stages—of which the chief representatives are, in the first case, Tennyson and Browning, in the second, Mr Swinburne, the Rossettis, and William Morris—with constant recovery or fresh invention of prosodic effect

It is on the continuity of this history that the student should keep his eye   Looked at partially, it may seem to lack this continuity ; looked at as a whole, it will be seen to exhibit exactly the alternate or successive predominance of different tendencies and developments in which all healthy life-history consists   No partial and inconsecutive explanations as to widely differing pronunciation of vowels at different times, none of "quantity" having the prefer-

ence at one time and "accent" at another, or of certain
feet inclining to these things respectively, are necessary, or
should be entertained   The birth, progress, and perfecting
of the foot under the guidance of equivalent substitution,
now vividly present, now apparently in abeyance, but
always potentially existing—this is "the mystery of this
wonderful history," the open secret of English prosodic life.

BOOK III

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF VIEWS ON
PROSODY

CHAPTER I

IN hardly any language are studious investigations into the Dearth of
early
prosodic
studies form of verse likely to be early, and in a language with such a history as English they could not possibly be so We have indeed, from the early fourteenth century, some remarks of Robert of Brunne on kinds of verse—"cowee" (Romance-six), "baston,"[1] "enterlace" (pretty obvious), etc, but with no explanation or discussion, and Chaucer himself (who, in this respect as in others, is slavishly followed by Lydgate[2]) makes apologies for roughness and inexperience[3] In Gower (*Conf Am* IV 2414) there is a reference, but after Chaucer and not yet quite satisfactorily explained, to the difference between "rhyme" and "cadence," while in the Scottish chronicler Wyntoun there is another reference[4] to "cadence" Again, in Chaucer we have the Parson's famous disclaimer of indulgence in "rum ram ruf," because the speaker is "a Southern man" But not one of these things makes the slightest pretence to be even a prosodic discussion, let alone a prosodic treatise, and it is

[1] Perhaps general for a stanza   Certainly used in one case for a six-lined one of four longer lines and two shorter

[2] In his *Troy Book* he says that, "as tho" [at that time] he "set aside truth of metre," "had no guide in that art," and "took no heed of short and long"

[3] *House of Fame*, Book III, where he disclaims intention to "shew art poetical," speaks of his "rhyme" as "light and *lewed*" [unlearned], admits that "some verses' may "fail in a syllable," and precedes (possibly patterning) Gower in distinguishing "rhyme" and "cadence"

[4] He says that the substitution of "Procurator" for "Emperor" "had mair grievèd the *cadence* Than had relievèd the sentence [meaning]"

not till towards the end of the third quarter of the sixteenth century—when a whole generation had already followed Wyatt in endeavouring to effect, in practice, the reform of the prosodic breakdown from Lydgate to Hawes, if not even to Barclay—that the first English prosodic treatise appears in the shape of Gascoigne's *Notes of Instruction* (1572-75).   They had been a little anticipated in time by remarks of Ascham's, and perhaps of others, on a new fashion of classical "versing," on which more presently, but this, though essentially prosodic in character, had not yet formed the subject of a regular treatise, and its exponents implicitly or expressly declined all meddling with "beggarly rhyme," *i e* with the form of English poetry proper

Gascoigne

Gascoigne's little book [1] is very short, very practical, very sensible, and—except in one unlucky remark, which (or rather the misunderstanding of it) has done harm to the present day—in the main, perfectly sound.   He dwells on the importance of accent and of the observation of it and he was quite right, for even Wyatt had been very loose in this respect, and the desire to get out of the doggerel of the fifteenth century [2] had led novices in precision to strain the accent, in order that they might keep the quantity   But he insists also—and with more than a century of awful examples to justify him if he had cared to use them—on "keeping metre"—on not wandering from lines of one length or character to those of another as the rhyme-royalists of the preceding century constantly do   He gives rules for the pause, leaving rhyme-royal itself free in that respect   He mentions especially, besides rhyme-royal, "riding rhyme" (Chaucerian couplet), "poulter's measure " (the alternate Alexandrine and fourteener), and octosyllables   He deprecates poetic commonplaces ("cherry lips " and the like), and gives some positive

[1] For editions, etc , of this and other books named and discussed in this survey, see Bibliography

[2] The passage referred to above (p 166) as illustrating this, in the *Mirror for Magistrates* (ed. Haslewood, ii. 394, and see *Hist. Pros* ii. 188), is anterior to Gascoigne

rules for pronunciation ("Heav'n" is to be always mono-
syllabic).

The excepted unlucky point is his remark that "com- His remark
monly nowadays in English rhymes we use no other than a on feet
foot of two syllables, whereof the first is depressed and made
short, and the second elevated or made long."   He says
that "we have used in times past other kinds of metres,"
giving as example the anapæstic line—

> No wight | in this world | that wealth | can attain , [1]

laments the restriction to iambs, and shows a remarkable
appreciation of Chaucer's "liberty that the Latinists do
use," *i e* equivalent substitution, though he may not have
quite correctly understood this

The desire for order and regularity in all this is very
noticeable, and perfectly intelligible to any one who has
appreciated (see last Book) the hopeless breakdown, due to
the neglect of these qualities, in English prosody between
1400 and 1530   Gascoigne's statement about the iamb
is, moreover, true of the majority of his own contemporaries,
though it overlooks such a writer as Tusser   But it would
be a grievous mistake (and unfortunately it has often been
committed) to accept this not quite accurate declaration
of ephemeral fact—accompanied as it is, more especially,
by another expression of regret for that fact—as a rule
and principle governing Elizabethan and English poetry

Gascoigne's little treatise was followed at no great
intervals, but after his own death, by more elaborate dealings
with the subject—some of them exclusively or mainly
devoted to the new craze for classical metres, others treating
the subject at large and merely referring to the "versing"
attempts   The order of these compositions, with a very
brief sketch of their contents, may now be given.

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[1] Observe that this *might* be scanned

> No wight | in this | world that | wealth can | attain

But then it would not be "another kind of metre "   The remark is not
without bearing on the suggested possibility of Spenser's " February "
being mistaken heroic

Spenser and
Harvey

In the winter of 1579-80, the date of the appearance of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, Spenser and his pragmatical friend Gabriel Harvey exchanged certain letters (which we have) dealing with the " versing " attempt that Spenser himself makes   An experiment in quantified trimeter refers to "rules" on the subject made by a Cambridge man named Drant, but does not (unfortunately) give them, and asks for Harvey's own   Harvey blows rather hot and cold on the matter, approving the system, but criticising the details.

Stanyhurst

Next, in 1582, came the *Preface* to Richard Stanyhurst's translation of the *Aeneid*, a book famous for the strange language in which it is written, but, as far as its Preface is concerned, a very sober and scientific attempt to do an impossible thing   Stanyhurst endeavours to arrange a set of rules for determining the quantity of every syllable in English, *not* necessarily according to its Latin or other derivation, but on principles germane to the language itself.   He does not and cannot succeed , but his attempt is interesting, and rather less contrary to facts than some recent attempts of the same kind.

Webbe

He was followed, in 1586, by William Webbe, whose *Discourse of English Poetry* is notable for the enthusiasm displayed by the author towards Spenser (the *Shepherd's Calendar* had appeared some years previously) , for his curiously combined enthusiasm as regards the classical metres which Spenser had tried and dropped , for the first *published* sketch of the history of English poetry (erroneous, but interesting) , and for a certain number of desultory remarks on prosodic subjects, mostly brought round to the classical fancy, though showing the interest which these questions were exciting   But between Stanyhurst and Webbe one book of the kind had appeared, and another had been perhaps composed, though not printed, in the same year—1584   The first was King James the Sixth of Scotland's *Rewlis and Cautelis* for the making of verse in his native dialect   Obligation has been traced in it to Gascoigne and to the 'great French poet Ronsard '   It is

King James
VI

very clear and precise, but of no wide interest, being simply an analysis of recent actual Scots verse with some peculiarities of terminology It is our first methodical book of prosody, and some of its titles, such as "cuttit and broken " verse for the metres of very irregular line-length which were growing so fashionable, and which were to excite the displeasure of the eighteenth century, are distinctly useful Not so perhaps another—" tumbling verse "—which is of uncertain application to alliterative-anapæstic or to mere doggerel rhythm—which has complicated the question of "cadence " (*v sup*), (of this it has been, perhaps correctly, thought to have been intended as an English translation), and which was adopted rather arbitrarily by Guest (*v inf*)

The other book, written in or before 1584, though not published till 1589, was the most elaborate treatment of English prosody yet attempted, and continued to be so until Mitford's treatise (*v inf*) nearly two hundred years later The *Art of English Poesy*, as it not too arrogantly called itself, has no certain author, but has been by turns attributed to two brothers, George and Richard Puttenham It is, in the original, a treatise of some 257 well-filled pages About half of these is indeed occupied by an immense list of the fancifully devised " Figures of Speech " which the Greek rhetoricians had excogitated, and which apply (in so far as they have any real application at all) not more to poetry than to prose But the First Book contains an elaborate discussion or defence of poetry generally, ending with a sketch of English poets, probably, if not certainly, written earlier than Webbe's And the Second is a very full and formal handling of the formal part of poetry, the discussion being carried so far as to include those artificial figures in squares, lozenges, altars, wings, etc, which more than one age fancied, but which, in English, hardly survived the satire of Addison Puttenham, however, takes great pains to point out the exact form of different regular stanzas ; arranges line-lengths, dwells on rhyme, pause, accent, and other matters of importance ; considers the classical "versing " (though he does not like it) ; and, in short, treats the whole

subject, as far as his lights and opportunities permit, in a really business-like manner.   It was somewhat unfortunate that he came a little too soon, neither the *Faerie Queene* nor probably any of the greatest plays of the "University Wits" having appeared at the time he wrote—nothing, in short, of the best time and kind but the *Shepherd's Calendar*

The later years of the sixteenth century were less fruitful in regular prosodic discussion, though the old wrangle about "versing"[1] continued at intervals between Harvey and Nash, and some scattered observations on prosody exist, by Drayton and others   But in the earliest years of the seventeenth the first-named dispute, after hanging about for more than half a century since Ascham's day, was laid to rest, for the time and (except in scattered touches) for nearly two centuries afterwards, by the poet Thomas Campion's tractate on certain new forms of verse (not hexameters) devised by himself, and the reply of another poet, Samuel Daniel, in his *Defence of Rhyme*   Campion, an exquisite master of natural rhymed verse, did not wholly fail with his artificial creations of " English elegiacs," " English anacreontics," etc —metres based mainly on iambs and trochees, though with some trisyllabic feet grudgingly allowed   He not merely does not support the dactylic hexameter, but pronounces against it , and his main objection seems to lie against rhyme   He also, like Stanyhurst, attempts a scheme of English quantity, though he admits the abundance of " common " syllables with us Daniel in his answer confined himself to generalities, but with the most triumphant effect—basing his defence of rhyme on " Custom and Nature "; alleging the omnipotence of delight which is unquestionably given by and received from rhyme , and asking why, when in polity, religion, etc , we notoriously and profoundly differ from the Greeks and Latins, we are to imitate them in verse ?   He points out, again with absolute truth, that Campion's own versification is mostly or wholly nothing but old forms stripped of rhyme,

Campion and Daniel

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[1] At this time the technical phrase for classical-quantitative versification without rhyme

and urges the hopelessness of adjusting, even on the reformer's own system, English quantity to classical   With this the thing became, and was long wisely allowed to be, *res judicata*

In a sense this little book, or rather pamphlet, may be said to conclude the first batch or period of prosodic study in English   For the whole of the seventeenth century after it, though one of the most important practically in the entire history, sees very little theoretical discussion   Ben Jonson had, we are told, written a treatise against both Campion and Daniel, especially the last, praising couplets "to be the bravest sort of verses, especially when they are broken like hexameters," and against "cross-rhymes and stanzas "   But we have not his own authority for this, which is only reported by Drummond, and the exact interpretation to be put upon "broken like hexameters " is absolutely uncertain.   The surfeit of stanza [1] is, however, an obvious fact, and is borne witness to by Drayton, in the remarks above referred to, and by others— things culminating in the verse precepts of Sir John Beaumont *(v sup)* recommending the stopped distich in a form which is almost eighteenth century   Had Jonson finished his *English Grammar* and given the prosodic section which he promised, we should know more   As it is, there is nothing of importance before the Restoration except the *English Parnassus* of Joshua Poole, published posthumously, with a remarkable Preface signed " J D ," which in point of time might be—but which there is not the slightest reason except date and initials to suppose to be—Dryden's. This Introduction is partly historical and not ignorant, while the author shows good sense and taste by objecting to "wrenched " rhymes ("náture " and " endùre "), to the habit of " apostrophation " or cutting out syllables supposed to be extra-metrical, and substituting apostrophes,[2] which

(margin: Ben Jonson, Drayton, Beaumont)

(margin: Joshua Poole and "J D")

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[1] Which, let it be remembered, had dominated English poetry, in rhyme-royal, for nearly two centuries from Chaucer to Sackville, and then in the Spenserian, the octave, and others, for three-quarters of a century more These surfeits always recur, though the octosyllabic couplet has suffered least from them   [2] " Wat ry," " prosp'rous," and even "vi'let "

was infesting the printing of the day, and was, to the great
corroboration of prosodic heresies, not got rid of for a
century and a half   He dislikes, too, the heavily over-
lapped verses then prevalent

Milton   Milton, inferior to no English poet in his practical
importance as a master of prosody, and perhaps superior
to all except Shakespeare, has nothing about it in the pre-
ceptist way, except his rather petulant outbreak against
rhyme [1] in the advertisement to *Paradise Lost* (an outbreak
largely neutralised by his own practice, not only earlier,
but later), and the reference to "committing short and

Dryden   long" in Sonnet XIII [2]   And Dryden almost repeats the
tantalising conditions of Jonson's attitude to the subject
He tells us that he actually had in preparation a treatise
on it, but nothing more has ever been heard of this,
and, large as is the amount of his work in literary
criticism, his references to this part of it are few and are
mostly vague   He does indeed tell us that no vowel
can be cut off before another when we cannot sink the
pronunciation of it, and if this observation be extended to
elision generally it is important   But, on the whole, the
most significant passages on prosody of the later seventeenth
century are the work of a more obscure writer, Samuel

Woodford   Woodford, in his Prefaces to Paraphrases of the *Psalms*
(1667) and the *Canticles* (1678)   Here criticising, as no one
else did, Milton from the prosodic point of view soon after
date, he recognises and defends trisyllabic feet, but is dis-
inclined to blank verse, regarding (and actually arranging)

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[1] As " the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and
lame metre,' "a barbarous and modern bondage," contrasting with " apt
numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from
one verse to another "

[2] This phrase, which has been treated as enigmatic, is quite clear in the
context, addressed to Lawes the musician as one

> Whose tuneful and well-measured song
> First taught our English music how to span
> Words with just note and accent, not to scan
> With Midas' ears, committing short and long

That is to say, Lawes was not guilty, as most composers notoriously are,
of laying musical stress on a syllable that could not prosodically bear it

it as rhythmed prose   The references of Lord Roscommon
and one or two others in verse, as well as of critics of
shadowy notoriety like Rymer and Dennis in prose, are
mostly trivial.

In this first division of English prosodists there is Comparative
observable a want of thoroughness—at first sight perhaps barrenness
strange, but easily explicable—which makes most of their of the whole
work little more than a curiosity   The only book which
attempts to grapple somewhat methodically with the whole
subject—that attributed to Puttenham—labours under two
fatal disadvantages   The first is that the writer has a
most imperfect knowledge, or rather an almost unmixed
ignorance, of what has come before him , and the second
is that he naturally cannot know what will come after
him, while what actually did come immediately after him
happens to be one of the greatest bodies, in bulk and merit
and variety, of English poetry   The two most gifted persons
who think of treating it, Jonson and Dryden, do not actually
do so , and it may be more than doubted whether, had
they done so, ignorance of the past would not still have
stood in their way   It is true that Dryden's *obiter dictum*,
that you must not elide what you must pronounce, is a
sort of ark of salvation which carries all the elements of a
sound prosody in it   But it is not certain that the writer
quite saw its full bearing, and that bearing was certainly not
seen by others   On the other hand, Gascoigne's innocent
but unlucky remark about the single two-syllabled foot
expresses an opinion which, though wholly erroneous,
undoubtedly did prevail very widely throughout the whole
period   The evidence of its falsity was indeed constantly
accumulating in blank verse during the first half of the
seventeenth century, in definite trisyllabic metres during
the second   But this evidence was ignored or disobligingly
received , and when, at the very beginning of the eighteenth,
Bysshe once more attempted formulation of prosodic
orthodoxy, he arranged a code which, as long as it was
observed, half maimed the sinews and half throttled the
song of English poetry

CHAPTER II

Bysshe's
*Art of
Poetry*
IN 1702, just after the beginning of the new century, there
appeared a book which, though it received little directly
critical notice, and was spoken of with disapproval by some
who did notice it, was repeatedly reprinted, and which
expressed, beyond all reasonable doubt, ideas prevalent
largely for a century or more before it, and almost uni-
versally for a century or more after it   This was the *Art
of Poetry* of Edward Bysshe   The bulk of it is composed
of dictionaries of rhyme, etc   But a brief Introduction
puts with equal conciseness and clearness the following
views on English prosody

"The structure of our verses, whether blank or in
rhyme, consists in a certain number of syllables, not in
feet composed of long and short syllables"   He works
this out carefully—explaining that verses of double rhyme
will always want one more syllable than verses of single,
decasyllables becoming hendecasyllables, verses of eight
syllables turning to nine, verses of seven to eight   "This
must also be observed in blank verse"   Then of the
several sorts of verses   Our poetry, he thinks, admits,
for the most part, of but three verses—those of ten, eight,
or seven syllables   Those of four, six, nine, eleven,
twelve, and fourteen are generally employed in masques
and operas and in the stanzas of lyric and Pindaric odes
We have few entire poems composed in them ; though
twelve and fourteen may be inserted in other measures
and even "carry a peculiar grace with them."   In deca-

syllabic verse two things are to be considered—the seat of the accent and the pause   The pause ought to be at the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable.   The strongest accent must be on the second, fourth, and sixth.   But he says nothing about accent in the last four places ; indeed he is less explicit about the second half of the line throughout. And he says less about accent generally than about pause, though he is sure that " wrong placing " of it is as great a fault in English as a false quantity was in the classical languages   To make a good decasyllable you must be careful that the accent is neither on the third nor on the fifth—a curious crab-like way of approaching the subject, but bringing out in strong relief the main principle of all this legislation, "Thou shalt not "   The verse of *seven* syllables, however, is most beautiful when the strongest accent *is* on the third

More curious still is his way of approaching trisyllabic metres   As such, he will not so much as speak of them. "Verses of nine and eleven syllables," it seems, "are of two sorts "   "Those accented on the last save one " are *merely the redundant eights and tens already spoken of* " The other [class] is those that are accented on the last syllable, which are employed only in compositions for music, and in the lowest sort of burlesque poetry, the disagreeableness of their measure having wholly excluded them from grave and serious subjects "   These are neither more nor less than anapæstic three- and four-foot verses ; though for some extraordinary reason Bysshe does not even mention the full twelve-syllable form under any head whatever   I suppose the "lowness and disagreeableness " of the thing was too much for him, and as he had dis- allowed feet he had, at any rate, some logical excuse in making nothing of them.   He admits triplets in heroic, and repeats his admission of Alexandrines and fourteeners. " The verses of four or six syllables have nothing worth observing," though he condescends to give some from Dryden.

Under the head of "Rules conducing to the beauty

of our versification," and with the exordium, " Our poetry
being very much polished and refined since the days of
Chaucer, Spenser, and other ancient poets," we find that
you must avoid hiatus, *always* cut off the *e* of "the"
before a vowel, never allow such collocations as "th*y*
*i*ambics" or "int*o* *a* book", never value such syllables
as "amaz*è*d" and "lov*è*d," but always contract them,
avoid alliteration, never split adjective from substan-
tive, or preposition from verb, at the end of a line.
"Beauteous" is but two syllables, "victorious" but three
You must not make "riot" one syllable as Milton does [1]
You *may* contract "vi'let" and "di'mond," and if you
do, should write them so   " Temp'rance," "difi'rent,"
etc, are all right, and you may use "fab'lous" and
"mar'ner"   But Bysshe acknowledges that "this is not
so frequent"   And he rejects or doubts some of the
more violent and most hideous apostrophations, such as,
" b' " for " by," but has no doubt about "t' amaze," " I'm,"
" they've," and most others   Rhyme is not very fully
dealt with, but for the most part correctly enough—so
far as Bysshe's principles go   Stanzas of "intermixed
rhyme" (like rhyme-royal, the octave, and the Spenserian)
"are now wholly laid aside," for long poems at least
Shakespeare invented blank verse to escape "the tiresome
constraint of rhyme"   Acrostics and anagrams "deserve
not to be mentioned "

Its import-
ance   If any one has read this account carefully he will
perceive at once what Bysshe's ideals and standards are
They put the strict decasyllabic couplet, with no substitu-
tion, no overrunning of lines, a fixed middle pause, and as
nearly as possible an unvaried iambic cadence, into the
principal place—if not quite the sole place of honour—in
English poetry   They frown upon stanzas, upon varied
metres of any kind, and even upon unvaried anapæstic or
" triple " measures   Strict syllabic scansion, with a con-
sideration of accent, is the only process allowed, and
even Dryden, just dead, and still regarded as the greatest

[1] Of course Milton does *not*

of English poets, is directly though gently reproached for
too great variety and laxity, as well as indirectly blamed
for using " low " and " disagreeable " forms   The author
seems to have been a very obscure person, of whom little
or nothing is known , but any one who really knows
English poetry will see that he practically expresses the
mind that dominated it during almost the whole of the
eighteenth century

Either from Bysshe's starting the question , or from the   Minor
same general influence which made him start it , or from   prosodists o
                                                              the mid
the supposed tendency, not to be too hastily accepted, of   eighteenth
                                                              century
a lull in creative poetry to be followed by an access of
criticism—there is, from this time onward, no lack of
prosodic work   John Brightland, in an *English Grammar*
(1711), opposed Bysshe on the subject of accent , and he
was also spoken of disparagingly by Charles Gildon, who
produced two books, *The Complete Art of Poetry* (1718)
and the *Laws of Poetry* (1721)   Gildon was a pert and
rather superficial writer who deservedly came under the
lash of Pope , and, though neither quite ignorant nor quite
stupid, he initiated a course of error which has never yet
been stopped, by confusing prosody with music and
arranging it by musical signs   Between Bysshe and his
two critics Dr Watts had, in the preface to his *Horae
Lyricae*, given some prosodic remarks indicating discontent
with the monotony of the couplet, an appreciation (not
unmixed with criticism) of Milton, and other good things
But, before long, the question whether Accent or Quantity
governs English verse — often complicated with the
attempt to interpret this latter by musical notation—
absorbed an altogether disproportionate amount of atten-
tion.   The works of Pemberton (1738), Mainwaring,
Foster, Harris, Lord Kames, Webb, and Say (1744)
must be consulted by exhaustive students of the subject,
and will be found duly commented upon in the larger
History by the present writer   But they hardly need
detailed notice here, any more than the later lucubrations
of Lord Monboddo, Tucker, Nares, Fogg, and others.

Their general tendency—which was indeed, as has been said, the general tendency of the century, correctly harbingered by Bysshe—was to concentrate attention on the heroic line, and indeed to regard it as strictly iambic, trisyllabic feet being wholly rejected, and even trochaic substitution either rejected likewise, as by Pemberton, or regarded as a more or less questionable licence   But the subject was also handled by persons of more literary importance, and in some cases, though not in all, of more insight and more knowledge

Dr Johnson   The most remarkable exponent of the general prosodic ideas of the century is undoubtedly Dr Samuel Johnson, who, though he wrote no special prosodic treatise, dealt with the subject in his *Dictionary*, in the *Rambler* (especially in connection with Milton), and in his *Lives of the Poets*. Except that Johnson does admit feet—or at least their names—his doctrine in the *Dictionary* hardly differs from Bysshe's as to the syllabic norm of lines, the strict regularity of accent constituting "harmony," and the duty of compounding superfluous syllables by elision, synalœpha, etc. He applies these doctrines in the *Lives*, and still more in his papers on Milton, Spenser, etc., in the *Rambler*. The spondees in Milton's lines—

$$\overline{\text{Both}} \ \overline{\text{stood}},$$

$$\overline{\text{Both}} \ \overline{\text{turned}},$$

and the trochees in his
$$\overline{\text{Un}} \ \smile$$
Uncropped falls to the ground,

and in Cowley's
$$\overline{} \ \smile$$
And the soft wings of peace cover him round,

are condemned as "inharmonious"   He objects to Milton's "elisions"—that is to say, the devices necessary on his own system to avoid trisyllabic feet—and so to these feet themselves   He thinks the Spenserian stanza, *Lycidas*, and the end of *Comus* bad, because the lines and rhymes are not regularly arranged   In short, he is an unhesitating — and almost the greatest — believer in the sheer, alternately accented, middle - paused, syllabically

limited decasyllable, though, with perhaps inevitable in-
consistency, he does admit that, without variation of
accent, the series of sounds would be not only very
difficult but "tiresome and disgusting," while maintaining
at the same time stoutly that this variation "always injures
the harmony of the line considered by itself"

The inconveniences of this rigid system were not, how- Shenstone.
ever, entirely unnoticed   At an uncertain time, but prob-
ably between 1740 and his death, the poet William
Shenstone urged, in a posthumously published Essay, the
beauty of what he called "virtual dactyls"—that is to say,
words like "watery" and "tottering,"—distinctly arguing that
"it seems absurd to print them otherwise than at full length"
—the "otherwise" being the established practice, based
upon definite theory, of the century   Johnson's friend the
elocutionist Sheridan, in his *Art of Reading* (1775), calls it Sheridan
absurd (as it certainly is) to regard "echoing" as metri-
cally "ech'ing"   And, later, the poet Cowper, though
using ambiguous and irresolute terminology on the subject,
admits the "divine harmony" of Milton's "elisions"—by
which, he explains in the most self-contradictory way,
"the line is *lengthened*"   While much earlier, at the very
middle of the century, John Mason, a little-known dissent- John Mason
ing minister, who was, like Sheridan, a teacher of elocu-
tion, quoting and scanning the lines—

> And many an amorous, many a humorous lay,
> Which many a bard had chanted many a day,

observes that this, "though it increases the number of
syllables, sweetens the flow of the verse," "gives a sweetness
that is not ordinarily found in the common iambic verse"
It would be impossible to state more correctly or more
definitely the case for the equivalent substitutional tri-
syllabic foot in English   But, as we shall see, it was to be
nearly two generations before considerable poets boldly
adopted (even then not always distinctly championing) the
idea, and an entire century, if not more, before the principle
was thoroughly accepted and understood.

Two deliberate prosodists, in two books published within a twelvemonth of each other, are memorable as (if not exactly starting) formulating, in a more elaborate way than had ever been done before, the one a mischievous and false, the other the only true method of dealing with prosody   Joshua Steele, in his *Prosodia Rationalis* (1775), is not always wrong, and William Mitford is not by any means invariably right—in fact, he partly shares Steele's error   But his *Harmony of English Verse* (1774) is even then to a great extent, and in its second edition, thirty years later, much more, occupied with a careful historical inquiry as to the actual successive forms of his subject from the earliest period   At first he had not even Tyrwhitt's invaluable *Chaucer*—which appeared in the year after Steele's book—to guide him   later he availed himself of the great accessions to the study of Middle and Elizabethan English which the intervening generation had seen   And so, though he believed too much in accent, and relied too much on the dangerous assistance of music, he frequently came right   He has no doubt (as it is astonishing that an historical student should have any doubt) about trisyllabic feet, he likes what he calls "aberration of accent," *i e* trochaic substitution, and he shows the possession of a fineness and cultivation of ear not as yet noticeable in any English prosodist, by observing the presence of anapæstic rhythm in the revived alliterative verse of Langland   Except the inadequate and perfunctory, as well as of necessity merely inchoate, sketches of Webbe and Puttenham, this was the first attempt really to take English poetry into consideration when studying English prosody, and it had its reward

Mitford

Joshua Steele

On the other hand, Steele, who has been followed by many other prosodists of the same school, entirely neglected the historical contents of his subject, approaching it absolutely *a priori*, deciding that it is essentially a matter of music, and basing his scansions on purely musical principles.   This led·him to begin with an anacrusis

in every case, and so to invert the whole rhythm of the
line   He has been praised for his views on "time" in
the abstract, and may deserve the praise , while he was
certainly right in regarding pause as an important metrical
constituent   But whatever merit there may be in his
principles from an abstract point of view, his concrete
practice is simply atrocious, and proves him to have had
absolutely no ear for English verse whatever   He makes
six feet or "cadences with proper rests," at least, and
sometimes more, in every heroic line, so that he would
scan one famous line thus—

> O | happiness, | our | being's | end and | aim,

and he arranges the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* for
scansion thus—

Of | man's | first diso|bedience | and the | fruit of | that for- |
bidden | tree | whose | mortal | taste brought | death | into the |
world | and | all our | woe, | Sing, | Heavenly | Muse

It must be perfectly evident to any one who will read
these examples, even to himself, but still more aloud, not
merely that they entirely destroy the actual cadence and
rhythm of the actual verses, but that they provide a
new doggerel which is absolutely inharmonious, un-
rhythmical, and contrary to every principle and quality
of English poetry   It would doubtless be possible to
accommodate them with a tune , in fact, any one who
has ever looked at a "set" song will see how they corre-
spond to it   But then any one who has ever looked at
a set song must, in a majority of cases, have been con-
vinced at once that musical arrangement has nothing
to do with prosodic

It was inevitable that the "Romantic" movement— Historical
one of the principal causes and features of which was a and Roman-
demand for variety, while another was its disposition to tic prosody
return to older modes—should be largely concerned with
prosody , but, with some notable exceptions, this concern-
ment did not take the form of actual prosodic deliverances
or discussions.   Gray, one of the chief precursors of the Gray.

movement, had projected a regular history of English
poetry, and has left invaluable notes under the general
head of *Metrum*—notes in which he goes back, deliberately
and directly, to Middle English, discovers therein the
origin and nature of the metre of Spenser's *February*, etc ,
and has very good remarks about others   But it was not
till the stir of the revolutionary period that much more
was done, and even then more was done than said   The
Taylor and German explorations of William Taylor of Norwich induced
Sayers. English writers to follow the German attempt at accentual
hexameters , and another of the Norwich group, Frank
Sayers, not merely wrote, but expounded and defended in
prose, rhymeless metres of a choric character , both being
—in part, if not mainly—revolts from the mechanical
Southey His heroic couplet   Before the end of the century, long
importance before Coleridge published the explanatory note on
Christabel metre, and not improbably before he had even
thought of that note, Southey had not only used trisyllabic
equivalence in his *Ballads*, but had formally and inde-
pendently defended it as such in a letter to his friend
Wordsworth. Wynn [1]   Wordsworth says very little about metrical detail

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[1] The passage is of importance and must be given —
   "And now   I proceed to the indictment of my ears   If the
charge had come from Dapple it would not have surprised me   One
may fancy him possessed of more than ordinary susceptibility of ear ,
but for the irritability of yours, I cannot so satisfactorily account   I
could heap authority on authority for using two very short syllables in
blank verse instead of one—*they take up only the time of one* [1]   'Spirit'
in particular is repeatedly placed as a monosyllable in Milton , and some
of his ass editors have attempted to print it as one, not feeling that the
rapid pronunciation of the two syllables does not lengthen the verse more
than the dilated sound of one   The other line you quote is still less
objectionable, because the old ballad style requires ruggedness, *if this
line were rugged* , and secondly, because the line itself rattles over the
tongue as smoothly as a curricle upon down-turf
$$\text{—} \ \cup \qquad \cup \qquad \text{—} \ \cup \ \cup \ \text{—} \ \cup \ \cup$$
I have made candles of infant's fat

This kind of cadence is repeatedly used in the *Old Woman* and in the
'Parody '" [2]
   The quantification, it should be observed, is original

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[1] Italics added
[2] *Letters of Robert Southey,* ed Warter (London, 1856), 1 69

in his famous Preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* and its successors—appearing to think, and indeed in one place asserting, that "harmony of numbers" comes of itself to a person who has other poetical qualifications.

His two just-mentioned friends, however, lodged, at a slightly later period, two of the most important preceptist documents of English prosody, though they were documents differing very widely in the extent and character of their importance These were Coleridge's note on the Coleridge. metre of *Christabel*, and Southey's Preface to the *Vision of Judgment* The latter is too long to give, and is written from a mistaken point of view, but it, and the much-ridiculed poem which it accompanied, undoubtedly restarted the practice of attempting to write English hexameters, which has been continued, with some intervals and some episodes, but at times most busily, ever since The former must be given at length, and some comment made on it —

"The metre of the *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, *Christabel*, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded its theory on a new principle, namely, that of counting, in each line, practice the accents, not the syllables Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion"

What *Christabel* metre really was has been expounded earlier, and its author's account of it is not a little surprising When he called its principle "new" he must have forgotten—not exactly the Middle English writers, whom he very likely did not know, nor perhaps Gray, though the latter's remarks on Spenser's *February* were actually published before *Christabel*, but—Spenser himself and Chatterton (both of whom he certainly knew, if not Blake also), as well as the very ballad-writers whom he had himself imitated in the *Ancient Mariner*. His

mention of "accents" and not "feet" argues an erroneous and inadequate theory which leaves much of the beauty of his own work unexplained, while it can be shown from the text itself that the variation of syllables, though metrically beautiful, often does not correspond at all with any special point of sense, passion, imagery, or anything else But his practice more than cured any wound which his theory may have inflicted

In comparison with Southey's and Coleridge's remarks, and still more with the practice of the latter in *Christabel* and the *Ancient Mariner*, the preceptist prosody of the extreme end of the eighteenth century, and the first third of the nineteenth becomes, except for exhaustive students of the subject, a mere curiosity, and not a very interesting one   Prosodic remarks, mostly erroneous or inadequate, found their way into popular handbooks, such as Walker's *Dictionary* (almost wholly wrong) and Lindley Murray's *Grammar* (partially right)   The musical theories of Steele were taken up by others, such as Odell, Roe, and, above all, the republican lecturer Thelwall, who, escaping the consequences of his earlier extravagances, became a teacher of elocution   The new Reviews gave opportunity for occasional critical remarks on the subject—the most notable of which was the *Quarterly* review, by Croker, of Keats's *Endymion*,—usually embodying the cramped and ignorant doctrinairism of the preceding century   Southey's hexameters started a large amount of writing on that subject In 1816 John Carey, compiler of the best-known Latin *Gradus* and author of many "cribs" and school editions, repeated most of the errors of Bysshe, but did grudgingly allow trisyllabic feet, and in 1827 William Crowe, a minor poet and Public Orator at Oxford, wrote a treatise of *English Versification*—good in method, but bad in principle —condemning the adjustment of very short to longer lines, etc.   Nothing of this period comes in importance near to that second edition of Mitford (1804, with most of the historical matter added) which has been noticed But in 1838—after the appearance of Tennyson and

Browning, but when no public attention had been paid to them—appeared the most elaborate, ambitious, and, partly at least, valuable work that had yet been written on the subject—the *History of English Rhythms,* by Edwin Guest, then Fellow, afterwards Master, of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge   Guest took nearly two years between the publication of the first and second volumes of his book, and admittedly changed his opinions on some points, but his main theories are unmistakable   He goes entirely by accent, denying metrical quantity in English altogether, and imposing curious arbitrary rules (such as that two adjoining syllables cannot be accented without a pause) on accent itself   But he possessed an immense and truly admirable knowledge of English verse—Old, Middle, and Modern—up to his time , and he lavished this, in a manner useful, indeed invaluable, to the present day, on the support of general theories which, unfortunately, are quite unsound

For Guest seems to have conducted his work under the influences of three different obsessions, no one of which he ever worked out thoroughly in all its bearings, which do not necessarily imply each other, and two of which are even rather contradictory

The first [1] was the belief that our verse is wholly dependent upon accent, and that "the principles of accentual rhythm," whatever they are, govern it exclusively

The second [2] was that the laws of English versification generally are somehow not only dependent on those of *Old* English versification, but identical with them, and always to be adjusted to them

The third [3] was that, somewhere about the early

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[1] The evidence of this obsession is concentrated in Book I chap iv pp 74 101 , but diffused over the entire treatise

[2] This seems to have presented itself to him throughout as a matter of course, not requiring demonstration and hardly likely to be contested , it is perhaps most categorically affirmed at Book II chap iii p 184

[3] This also is pervading   It "gathers itself up" most in the context just cited, and at pp 301 and 400-402, the two last among the most surprising instances of complete misunderstanding of history by a real historical scholar

thirteenth century, and increasingly till the end of the fourteenth, there took place a succession of alien invasions which never resulted in a coalescence or blending, but merely in the presence of two hostile elements ; and that while the perfect English versifier will cling to the older and only genuine one, he must, if he does not so cling, give it up altogether, and have nothing to do with anything but "the rhythm of the foreigner"

Now what has been already and will be later given in this book seems to show that these propositions are in fact false.

In the first place, though accent plays a large part in English prosody, that prosody is as far as possible from being purely or exclusively accentual

In the second, the oldest English poetry and its younger varieties are so utterly different that the same laws cannot, except *per accidens*, apply to them

In the third, instead of two jarring elements, we find before us, from the thirteenth century, at least, onwards, a more and more distinct and harmonious blend of language, resulting, of necessity, in a more and more distinct and harmonious blend of prosody

But there is also a *fourth* principle, which he adds to, rather than deduces from, the other three —

That the collocation of accented and unaccented syllables forms *sections*,[1] which in turn form, and into which can be reduced, all English verse.

On these principles he went through the whole body of English verse from Caedmon to Coleridge, arranging it with infinite trouble on the "sectional" system, and classifying the verses as those of "four accents," those of "five," and so on, with suitable distinctions for stanzas, etc   Unfortunately—to mention only the crowning and fatal fault which makes mention of all others in such a book as this unnecessary—he finds himself in perpetual

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[1] Perhaps it should be said that a " section " is a bundle of " accented " and " unaccented " syllables extending in possible bulk from *three* syllables with *two* accents (Guest's minimum) to *eleven* syllables with *three* accents. Of a pair of these, similar or dissimilar, a verse consists.

conflict with the practice of the greatest English poets in their most beautiful passages. Shakespeare and Milton go "contrary to every principle of accentual rhythm," and use devices which "they have no right" to use Coleridge and Burns employ sections which "have very little to recommend them " Spenser's verse is "wanting in good taste," and Byron's versification "has never been properly censured " It may seem incredible that a writer of learning and acuteness should not have seen the absurdity of his position when he tells beautiful poetry—sometimes admitted by himself as such—that it has no business to be beautiful because it does not suit his rules But the fact disposes of him, and of the rules themselves, without its being necessary—though it would be easy—to prove their want of intrinsic justification.

CHAPTER III

Discussions on the *Evangeline* hexameter THE amount of prosodic writing during the last seventy years has been very large.   In the earliest and latest parts of the period it was principally devoted to the subject of English hexameters—in the first, in regard to the accentual attempts of Longfellow, to which *Evangeline* gave immense popularity , in the last, to the counter-attempts at "quantitative" versification, in which the feet are constructed, not with reference to accent or to the way in which the words are ordinarily pronounced, but to independent and even opposed temporal value derived from the special sound attached to the vowel ("idol," long , "fiddle," short, etc), or, on semi-classical principles, to what is called "position "   To analyse the individual views of critics on these two bodies of questions would be here impossible, and reference must be made to the larger *History*, to Mr Omond's treatises, or to the original works, the most important of which will be found duly entered in the Bibliography   But we may summarise results under three heads

I The "accentual" or *Evangeline* hexameter has, as has been said, been at times far from unpopular , but it has always dissatisfied nicer ears by a certain *inappropriateness* which has been differently appraised, but which is evidently pointed at by the apology of its first extensive practitioner, Southey, that he could not get spondees enough, and had to be content with trochees   This inappropriateness has since been characterised by an un-

surpassed expert in theory and practice—Mr Swinburne
—in the blunt assertion that to English "all dactylic and
spondaic forms of verse are unnatural and abhorrent "

II On the other hand, the so-called quantitative verse
is repulsive to the same ears (unless, like Tennyson's
experiments, it is accommodated to ordinary pronunciation)
by the very fact that it sets that pronunciation expressly
at defiance, and makes sheer jargon of the language

III Considering these facts, some (among whom the
present writer is included) regard an apparent English
hexameter, such as that of Kingsley's *Andromeda*, and, still
more, that of certain verses of Mr Swinburne himself, as
an admirable and glorious metre, but as not dactylic at
all—scanning it as a five-foot anapæstic with anacrusis
(odd syllable at the beginning) and hypercatalexis (ditto
at the end) [1]

Of more general prosodic inquiry some selection-
summary must be given   Guest's original work does not
seem to have produced much effect, save on specially
scholarly writers interested in the subject, like Archbishop
Trench , though the reprint of it, forty years later, had,
as we shall see, a great deal of influence   Except on the
hexameter matter, there was little done between 1840 and
close upon 1870   It was, however, unfortunate that, at
the very opening of this time, Latham's *English Language*
embodied some very inadequate remarks on prosody,
including the symbol *xa* for an iamb, which has too much
permeated English text-books since   The works of Arch- Mid-century
deacon Evans and E S Dallas, both published in 1852, prosodists.
are important only to very thorough-going students   The
latter was acute, but fanciful and inclined to jargon   The
former, regarding stress as the only basis of modern
versification, indulged in a curious undervaluation of
English poetry generally   we must "forget all about
classical poetry to be satisfied with blank verse ", English
lyric has been " under an evil genius, and always a blank " ,
and Shakespeare and Milton "gained exceedingly" by

[1] For examples of all these see Scanned Conspectus

translation into Greek and Latin   Any intelligent reader can judge of such a tree by such fruits

Of really earlier date than these (for their author died in 1846) were Sidney Walker's remarks on *Shakespeare's Versification,* posthumously published in 1854, which contain some useful metrical observations[1]   Dallas's book produced at least two important reviews, each of which extended itself into a more important prosodic tractate   The first of these was by the late Professor Masson, who afterwards rearranged his prosodic ideas in a minute and very scholarly study of Milton's versification, appearing in his larger edition of the poet   Professor Masson perhaps admitted some unnecessary feet, such as the amphibrach, but his views are on the whole extremely sound   The other essay was by Coventry Patmore—a poet, a man of distinct originality in many ways,- and a really learned student of preceding prosodists—in fact, by far the most learned up to his time   This essay is full of suggestive and ingenious notions, but exceedingly crotchety, and, for persons not thoroughly grounded in the subject, unsafe It has the merit of recognising the division of verse into what it calls, by a rather ponderous term, "isochronous intervals" (that is to say, feet equivalent in time), and of recognising, likewise, the ◄important metrical as well as rhetorical part played by pause   But it exaggerates this part in an impossible fashion, making a full pause-foot at the end of every heroic line , and its attention to "accent" is also excessive and, in fact, inconsistent

On the whole, however, it was not, as has been said, till the very eve of 1870, when the Præ-Raphaelite school had made its appearance, that any considerable amount of prosodic writing came   Then, and in the very same year, 1869, there was a remarkable outburst, including *A Complete Practical Guide to the Whole Subject of English Versification* (by E Wadham), which represents a modified

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[1] Especially one which the student should apply for himself, that Shakespeare s incomplete lines are mostly regular fractions of complete ones, scanning correctly on the same system (*v sup* p 130)   ⁣

Bysshian system—believing in elision , thinking trisyllabic
feet bad, though they may exist, especially at the cæsura ,
discountenancing both blank and anapæstic verse , and
applying to the whole subject a new terminology which
has not been generally accepted   Then came also a
Manual of English Prosody by R F Brewer (reissued many
years afterwards as *Orthometry*), which contains a very large
amount of information on the details of the matter, but
little appreciation of its more important aspects   Much Those about
briefer, but, despite some errors, sounder on the whole, and 1870,
giving no bad introduction to the subject, was the *Rules of
Rhyme* of Tom Hood, son of the poet   Greater influence
than that of any of these has been exercised by the prosodic
part of Dr Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, published in
this year, and of his *English Lessons for English People*,
issued (and partly written by J R Seeley) two years later.
Unfortunately, not a few of the principles of these books
are either demonstrably unsound or very doubtful, the
worst of all being the insistence on "extra-metrical"
syllables, or, in other words, the confession that English
prosody cannot account for English poetry   1869 also
saw the beginning of a very important work, Mr A J Ellis's
Early English Pronunciation, which has had a great effect
on some views of prosody, and contains a very elaborate
scheme of syllabic values for quality and degree of force,
weight, etc

In 1874 Mr John Addington Symonds, a critic, prose-
writer, and even poet of no mean rank, published an essay,
which he afterwards expanded into a tractate, on *Blank
Verse*, denying that *any* preconceived metrical scheme will
explain this, and arguing that each line must be treated
separately according to its own sense   More minute than
any book since Guest's, and written with definite purpose
to teach poets their business, was Mr Gilbert Conway's
Treatise of Versification (1878), which reverts to eighteenth-
century theories, not merely of the scansion but of the
pronunciation of words like "ominous" and "delicate" ,
thinks' Milton "capricious" and' "inconsistent" , and

proceeds entirely on the principle that the base and back-
bone of English prosody is accent   Two years later
Mr Ruskin issued his *Elements of English Prosody*,
employing musical notation, but using the names of feet
very strangely applied   And a year later Mr Shadworth
Hodgson published a paper on " English Verse," perhaps
not uninfluenced by Guest, and advocating (as several
writers about his time began to do) "stress" systems of
scansion, the stress being allotted according to various
considerations of sense and otherwise   Another stress-man
—still more influenced, though partly in the way of correc-
tion, by Guest—was the late Professor Fleeming Jenkin, who
in 1883 wrote in the *Saturday Review* some papers,
republished after his death, and advocating "sections," of
which there may be as many as four in a normal heroic
line, though this may, on the other hand, have as many as
seven or even eight "beats" on strong syllables   Much
sounder than any of these—indeed, on practical matters
almost irreproachable—was Professor J B Mayor's *Chapters
on English Metre* (1886), on which he founded later a
Handbook of the subject (1903)

and since   In the last twenty or thirty years there has been an
increasing number of books on prosody, the names of the
most important of which will be found in the Bibliography
The most important of all is perhaps Mr Robert Bridges'
Prosody of Milton, increased in subsequent editions to
something like a manual of Stress Prosody, and contain-
ing material also for estimating the recent attempts, by
Mr Bridges himself and by the late Mr W J Stone, to
revive the writing of English hexameters on a quantitative,
not an accentual, basis   There have also been many
attempts (of which perhaps the most remarkable is a
treatise on monopressures, taken up and applied by Pro-
fessor Skeat) which would reduce prosody to a branch
of medical physics or physiology, by basing it on the
mechanical action of the glottis or larynx   And strong
and repeated efforts have also been made to bring the
subject entirely under the supervision of music—using

musical notation, musical terms such as "bar," and the like   The most widely influential of these was the work of the American poet and critic Sidney Lanier, the most recent, that of Mr William Thomson of Glasgow   On the other hand, the writings of Mr Omond, though some doubt may be entertained as to details, have the merits of absolute soundness on the general principles of the subject, and may be studied with ever-increasing advantage

These principles—general, and in relation to the Summary methods of treatment more especially dealt with in the last paragraph or two—may be briefly summarised before this sketch of our prosodist history is closed   Systems of stress prosody are unsatisfactory, because the unstressed syllables of the line, and their connection or grouping with the stressed ones, are of quite as much importance to total effect as stresses themselves, and because attention to stress seems to beget the notion that regularity of time and time-interval is of no importance [1]

Physiological-mechanical systems are altogether insufficient, even if not wrong, because they only refer to the raw material of prosody, because, in their nature, they must be applicable to verse and prose alike, and to all kinds of verse, with the additional disadvantage that, as actually explained by their advocates, they usually make verse-arrangements of the most inharmonious and unpoetical character [2]

This latter objection applies with even greater force to the musical theorists, whose explanations of verse invariably confuse rhythm or overturn it altogether, while their whole system ignores the fact, that music and prosody are quite different things—that they may perhaps be accommodated

[1] Thus Mr Bridges, though he himself does *not* neglect the unstressed, and even makes combination of the two kinds which are actually feet, would allow sometimes *four* and sometimes only *three* stresses in a heroic line   Later stress (or " stress-*cum*-music ") prosodists have even proposed to recognise *two* " bars " only in such a line

[2] Thus it has been proposed to scan a line of Goldsmith

,   The sheltered | cot, | the culti|vated | farm

in particular cases, but that this accommodation is by no means frequent

In some cases, chiefly those of foreigners who have undertaken the study of English verse, return has been attempted to the rigid syllabic methods of Bysshe and his followers   But it is usually admitted by these persons that the method does not suit nineteenth-century poetry, and they are open therefore to the fatal charge of having to suppress part, and a most important part, of the historical life of the subject

On the other hand, the system of corresponding foot-division, with equivalence and substitution allowed, which has been followed in this book, is open to none of these objections   It neither neglects nor suppresses any part of the line in any case, but accounts fully for all parts It applies to poetry only, and, to a large extent at least, explains the difference between good poetry and bad   It adjusts itself to the entire history of English verse, since the English language took the turn which made it English in the full sense   It requires no metrical fictions, no suppression of syllables, no allowance of extra-metrical ones, no alteration in pronouncing, no conflict of accent and quantity   No period or kind of English poetry is pronounced by it to be wrong, though it may allow that certain periods have exercised their rights and privileges more fully than others   In short, it takes the poetry as it is, and has been for seven hundred years at least, bars nothing, carves, cuts, and corrects nothing, begs no questions, involves no make-believes ; but accepts the facts, and makes out of them what, and what only, the facts will bear.

BOOK IV
AUXILIARY APPARATUS

CHAPTER I

(The miniature glossary which I prefixed to my larger *History* having been found useful, and indeed some complaints having been made that it was not fuller, I have determined to go to the other extreme here, with a special view to those readers who may be approaching the subject for the first time   Excepting words like "trisyllabic," etc , which can hardly be thought to require explanation, an attempt has been made to include almost every technical, and especially every disputed, term)

Accent —This term, which is perhaps the principal centre of dispute in matters prosodic, and which, even outside strict prosody, is not a little controversial, may be defined, as uncontroversially as possible, in the words of a highly respectable book of reference,[1] " A superior force of voice, or of articulative effort, upon some particular syllable " It is prosodically used as equivalent (with some slight differences) to "stress," and is regarded by a large—perhaps the most numerous—school as constituting the foundation-stone of English prosody   The inconveniences and insufficiencies of this view will be found constantly indicated throughout this book   On the question, almost more debated, what constitutes, and in different languages and times has constituted, accent itself—whether it is loudness, duration, "pitch," or what not of sound—no pronouncement has been or will be attempted in this volume.

[1] Webster's *Dictionary.*

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ACEPHALOUS —A term applied to a line in which the first syllable, according to its ordinary norm or form, is wanting, as in Chaucer's

⌃ Twen|ty bo|kès clad | in blak | or reed

ACROSTIC —An arrangement, not perhaps strictly pro-sodic, by which the initial syllables of the lines of a poem make words or names of themselves, as in Sir John Davies's *Astræa*, where these initials in every piece make " Elizabetha Regina " The process is now chiefly confined to light verse, but there is nothing to be said against it, unless the sense is strained or perverted to get the letters

ALCAIC —A Greek lyrical measure, used by and named after the famous lyrical poet Alcæus, but most familiar in the slightly altered Latin form of Horace Like all these forms, it is only a curiosity in English, and, even as such, has shared the endless and hopeless controversies as to accentual and quantitative metre No one, however, is ever likely to get nearer to the real thing than Tennyson in

> Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
> The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
> And bloom profuse, and cedar arches,
> Charm as a wanderer out in Ocean

The strict Horatian form (the last syllables being, as usual, common) is

$$- - \cup - - - \cup \cup - \cup \cup$$
$$- - \cup - - - \cup \cup - \cup \cup$$
$$- - \cup - - - \cup - \cup$$
$$- \cup \cup - \cup \cup - \cup - \cup$$

ALEXANDRINE —A line of twelve syllables or six iambic feet This measure (traditionally said to have taken its name from the Old French poem on Alexander) became the favourite metre for the *chansons de geste* or long narra-tive poems in that language, and then practically the staple of French verse to the present day But though it is early traced—as a whole or as two halves—in English, it never established itself as a continuous metre with us Only two pieces of importance, Drayton's *Polyolbion* and Browning's *Fifine at the Fair*, so employ it On the other

hand, it is constantly found scattered about early English verse, appears—questionably according to some, unquestionably according to the present writer—in Chaucer, was an ingredient in the "poulter's measure" (*v. inf*), so popular with the poets of the second and third quarters of the sixteenth century, was used by Sidney continuously in sonnet, forms, as a concluding line, the distinguishing feature of the great Spenserian stanza, is very frequent in Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan dramatists, and was adopted by Dryden (though latterly, and then not quite always, rejected by Pope) as a relief and variation to the heroic couplet It also supplies a frequent ingredient in Pindaric verse and in various lyrical stanzas For its perfection it almost requires a central cæsura at the sixth syllable.

In Dryden (probably from insufficient information), in Warton (less excusably), and in some more modern writers (without any excuse at all), "long Alexandrine," or sometimes even Alexandrine by itself, is used to designate the fourteener, "seven-beat," or seven-foot iambic line This ignores the derivation, contravenes the established use of French, the special home of the metre, and introduces an unnecessary and disastrous confusion

ALLITERATION —The repetition of the same letter at the beginning or (less frequently) in the body of different words in more or less close juxtaposition to each other. This, which appears slightly, but very slightly, in classical poetry, has always been a great feature of English During the Anglo-Saxon period universally, and during a later period (after an interval which almost certainly existed, but the length of which is uncertain) partially, it formed, till the sixteenth century, a substantive and structural part of English prosody. Later, it became merely an ornament, and at times, especially in the eighteenth century, has been disapproved But it forms part of the very vitals of the language, and has never been more triumphantly used than in the late nineteenth century by Mr. Swinburne.

AMPHIBRACH —A foot of three syllables—short, long, short ($\smile - \smile$)—literally "short on each side" According to some, this foot is not uncommon in English poetry, as, for instance, in Byron's

<div align="center">

$\smile$ — $\smile$ $\smile$ — $\smile$
The black bands | came over
$\smile$ — $\smile$ $\smile$ —
The Alps and | their snow,

</div>

as well as individually for a foot of substitution. Others, including the present writer, think that these cases can always, or almost always, be better arranged as anapæsts—

<div align="center">

$\smile$ — $\smile$ $\smile$ —
The black | bands came o|ver
$\smile$ — $\smile$ $\smile$ —
The Alps | and their snow,

</div>

and that the amphibrach is unnecessary, or, at any rate, very very rare in English

AMPHIMACER ("long on both sides")—Long, short, long ($- \smile -$)—an exactly opposite arrangement to the amphibrach, also, and more commonly, called *Cretic*. It is more than doubtful whether this arrangement, *as an actual foot*, ever occurs in English verse or is suitable to English rhythm , but the name (preferably Cretic) is sometimes useful to designate a combination of syllables belonging to more feet than one, and possessing a certain connection, as expressing either the quantity of a single word or that of a rhetorical division [1] of a line

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[1] NOTE ON MUSICAL AND RHETORICAL ARRANGEMENTS OF VERSE

It has been said above (Book I Chap V Rule 41, p 35) that certain additional arrangements of verse may be made for musical or rhetorical purposes   This no doubt requires explanation and example, the latter especially   It shall now have them

Tennyson's

<div align="center">The watch|er on | the col|umn to | the end,</div>

and Mr Swinburne's

<div align="center">The thun|der of | the trum|pets of | the night,</div>

are both regular and unexceptionable "heroics," "five-foot iambics,"

ANACRUSIS —A syllable or half-foot prefixed to a verse, and serving as a sort of "take-off" or "push-off" for it This, frequent in Greek, is by no means rare in English, though there are numerous disputes as to its application It has sometimes been proposed to call it with us "catch", and, whatever it be called, it comes into great prominence in connection with the question whether the general rhythm of English verse is iambic or trochaic, while it is almost the hinge of the whole matter on the other question whether the English hexameter is really dactylic or anapæstic

ANAPÆST —A trisyllabic foot consisting of two shorts

"decasyllabic lines," etc   But in reading them the voice will not improbably be tempted (and need not resist the temptation) to arrange them as

The watcher | on the column | to the end

and

The thunder | of the trumpets | of the night

respectively, while in the case of the latter line other dispositions are possible   In blank-verse paragraphs especially, the poet is likely to suggest a great deal of such scansion   No doubt there are in this arrangement four-syllable divisions and three-syllable ones like amphibrachs, etc , but that does not matter, because the line has already passed the regular prosodic tests   And no doubt the sections, or whatever they are to be called, are not strictly substitutable , but then on this scheme, which is not positively prosodic and applies to the individual line only, they need not be   So, too, there is no harm in dividing Hood's famous piece, for musical purposes, into ditrochees

I remember | I remember,
How my little | lovers came,

or even in making what are practically eight feet out of

All peo ple that on earth do dwell,

in order to get an impressive musical effect   Here also the lines have passed the prosodic preliminary or matriculation , as in the one case trochaic tetrameters catalectic split in half , in the other, as ordinary "long measure '

Now it is this necessary preliminary which the plain- and fancy-stress prosodists neglect , putting their stress divisions not on the top, but in the place of it   And the probable result would be, if the proceeding were widely followed—as, indeed, it has been already to some small extent,—the creation of a new chaos like that of fifteenth-century South-English verse generally, or of blank verse and heroic couplet in the mid-seventeenth.

and a long ($\smile \smile -$)   Almost as soon as English poetry proper makes its appearance, this measure or cadence appears too, for a time chiefly as an equivalent to the iamb.   In the revived alliterative metre it to a great extent ousts the trochee, and to one almost as great dominates the doggerel of the fifteenth century   As a continuous metre the early examples of it are well marked, though not very numerous, but in the sixteenth century it seems (no doubt with the help of music) to have caught the popular ear, and from the late seventeenth has been thoroughly established in literature   It is perhaps the chief enlivening and inspiriting force in English poetry, and, while powerful for serious purposes, is almost indispensable for comic

ANTI-BACCHIC or ANTI-BACCHIUS — A trisyllabic foot opposite to the Bacchic as a definite foot—a short followed by two long ($\smile - -$)   Of very doubtful occurrence anywhere in English verse, though the same remark applies to it as to the amphibrach, the amphimacer, other trisyllabic feet, and all tetrasyllabic, in regard to secondary or rhetorical use

ANTISPAST   (" pulling against ") — A four - syllabled foot—short, long, long, short ($\smile - - \smile$)—opposed to the choriambic   Like all four-syllabled feet, it is not wanted in English poetry, being always resolvable into its constituents, the iamb and trochee   But the combined effect may sometimes be represented by it—with this *caveat*, as in other cases

ANTISTROPHE — See STROPHE

APPOGGIATURA — A musical term which has no business whatever in prosody, but which has been used by some (*e g* Thelwall) to evade the allowance of equivalence, and the substitution of trisyllabic for dissyllabic feet   Its definition in music is "a short auxiliary or grace-note forming no essential part of the harmony "   The nearest actual approach to it in English verse would appear to be the extra syllables found (by licence very rare until recently) in such lines as Scott's in the "Eve of St John," Moore's in

" Eveleen's Bower " and elsewhere, and Macaulay's in
" The Last Buccaneer "—*e g*

And I'll chain | the bloodhound | and the ward*er* | shall not sound [1]

ARSIS and its opposite, THESIS, are two terms much used
in prosody, though unfortunately with meanings themselves
attached in diametrical opposition to the same word
The words literally mean " lifting up " and " putting down "
respectively   At first, among the Greeks themselves, the
metaphor seems to have been taken from the raising and
putting down of the *foot* or *hand*, so that " arsis " would
make a light or short, and " thesis " a heavy or long
syllable   By the Latins, and by the great majority of
modern prosodists in reference even to Greek, the metaphor
is transferred to the raising or dropping of the *voice*, so
that " arsis " lengthens and " thesis " shortens   This,
which, whether the older or not, seems to be the better
use, is followed here

ASSONANCE.—An imperfect form of rhyme which counts
only the vowel sound of the chief rhyming syllable   This
principle was the original one of rhyme in French, and
has always held a considerable place in Spanish   But in
English it has never established itself in competent literary
poetry, though it is frequent in the lower kind of folk-song,
and though attempts to naturalise it—in forms even further
degraded—were made by Mrs Browning, and have been
suggested since   As an instrument of vowel-music, very
delicately and judiciously used at other parts of the line
than the end, it has its possibilities, but must always be
an offensive substitute in rhyming verse, and an almost
equally offensive intruder in blank.

ATONIC (" without accent ") — When employed in
prosody, is applied to those languages which, though
they may use accentual symbols, have nothing in the

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[1] See the larger *History* for fuller discussion of this   Such lines will
often scan trochaically (or in some other way) so as to take in the outside
syllable, but the question then arises *whether such scansion will suit the
context*

pronunciation that can be made the base of an actual scansion—the chief example being French.

BACCHIC or BACCHIUS —A three - syllable foot—long, long, short ($-\ -\ \smile$)—the opposite of anti - Bacchic and subject to the same observations

BALLAD (rarely Ball*et*) —A word common to most European languages, but used very loosely, and to be carefully distinguished from *Ballade* (see following item) Its original connection is with singing and dancing (Italian *ballare*), and it came, centuries ago, to be used for any short poem of a lyrical character It has, however, a special application to short pieces of a narrative kind , and "The Ballads " has, as a phrase of English literary history, frequent reference to the body of such compositions of which the pieces about Robin Hood are early examples It is most commonly, though not universally, written in the "ballad metre " described below

BALLADE, on the other hand, is a term arbitrarily restricted to a measure originally and mostly French, but frequently written in English during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and revived in the nineteenth It consists usually of three stanzas and a *coda* or *envoi*, written on the same recurrent rhymes, with a refrain at the end of each   (See example above, p 126)

BALLAD METRE or COMMON MEASURE — The most usual quatrain in English poetry, consisting, in its simplest form, of alternate octosyllables and hexasyllables , the even lines always rhyming, and the odd ones very commonly In the best examples, old and new (but less frequently in the late sixteenth, early seventeenth, and almost whole eighteenth century), the lines are largely equivalenced, and it is not unusual for the stanza to be extended to five or more   The most perfect example of ballad metre is Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*

BAR and BEAT —Two musical terms used by stress-prosodists and others who refuse the foot-system   " Bar " is strictly the division between groups of " beats," loosely

the groups themselves   "Beat" is the unit of time or measure   On a sound and germane system of prosody neither is needed

BLANK VERSE⟩ on the analogy of blank cartridge, etc⟩ might be held to designate any kind of verse not tipped, loaded, or filled up with rhyme.   As a matter of fact, however, and for sound historical reasons, it is not usually applied to the more modern unrhymed experiments, from Collins's "Evening" onwards, but is confined to continuous decasyllables   This measure (which, *mutatis mutandis*, had already been used by the Italians and Spaniards in the early sixteenth century, and of which curious foreshadowings are found in Chaucer's prose *Tale of Melibee* and elsewhere) was first attempted in English by the Earl of Surrey in his version of the *Æneid*. For a time it was very little imitated, but in the latter half of the century it gradually ousted all other competitors for dramatic use   It was still out of favour for non-dramatic purposes until Milton's great experiments in the later seventeenth , while about the same period it was for a time itself laid aside in drama   But it soon recovered its place there, and has never lost it , while during the eighteenth century it became more and more fashionable for poems proper, and has rather extended than contracted its business since

BOB AND WHEEL —An arrangement (see pp 48, 49) by which a stanza hitherto usually alliterated, but not rhymed, finishes with one much shorter line of usually two syllables, and then a batch, usually four, of lines not quite so short, but still shorter than the staple, and rhymed among themselves

BURDEN —The same as REFRAIN (*q v*)

BURNS METRE —An apparently artificial but extremely effective arrangement of six lines, 8, 8, 8, 4, 8, 4, rhymed *aaabab*, which derives its common name from the mastery shown, in and of it, by the Scottish poet   It is, however, far older than his time, having been traced to Provençal originals in the eleventh century, and it is very common

in the English miracle plays of the late fourteenth and fifteenth, and not unknown in the metrical romances, as in *Octovian Imperator*   Disused in Southern English by the time of the Renaissance, it seems to have kept its hold in Northern, and Burns received it either immediately from Fergusson or perhaps from Allan Ramsay   (See also below, in list of Form-origins)

CADENCE —In general, a term applied to the combined rhythm of a line or batch of lines   In one or two early passages of Wyntoun, Gower, and others, it seems to be employed in some special sense as opposed to, or separated from, rhyme, and has been conjectured to signify alliterative rhythm   But this is very uncertain, rather improbable, and in the Gower case impossible (See p 233)

CÆSURA ("cutting ") — A term applied, in classical prosody, to the regular provision of a word-ending at a certain place in the line, usually coinciding with a half-foot   The commonest cæsuras in Greek and Latin are penthemimeral ("fifth half"), or in the middle of the third foot, and hepthemimeral ("seventh half"), at the middle of the .fourth   At one time, in the earlier writers on English prosody (*e g* Dryden), there grew up a strange habit of using the term " cæsura " to express elision or hiatus— to neither of which has it the least proper reference. Correctly used, it is, in English, equivalent to "pause " (*q.v*), but restricted to the *principal* pause in a line

CAROL —A term, like " ballad," of rather loose application, but generally confined to religious lyrics of a definite song - kind   The original O.F *karole* referred to a rather elaborate *dance* with singing, and from this there has been a certain tendency to associate the carol with much broken and indented measures in prosody

CATALEXIS ("leaving off") —A term of great importance, inasmuch as there is no other single one which can replace it , but a little vague and elastic in use. Strictly speaking, a *catalectic* line is one which comes short, by a half-foot or syllable, of the full normal measure ,

a *brachycatalectic* ("short leaving off"), one which is a whole foot *minus*, and a *hypercatalectic* ("leaving over"), one which has a half foot (or perhaps a whole one in rare cases) too much   The terms "catalexis" and "catalectic" are sometimes used loosely to cover all these varieties of deficiency and redundance in their several developments   *Acatalectic* means a fully and exactly measured line, without either excess or defect

CATCH —See ANACRUSIS   The sense of "catch" as referring to a song in parts, with much substitution and repetition, is musical, not prosodic

CHANT-ROYAL —A larger and more elaborate *ballade*. five stanzas of eleven verses each and an *envoi* of from five to eight

CHORIAMB —A four-syllabled foot consisting of a trochee (or "choree") followed by an iamb $(- \smile \smile -)$ Although the remarks made on other four-syllabled feet apply here, as far as the ultimate analysis of English verse is concerned, the great frequency of juxtaposed trochees and iambs in English, and the natural way in which they seem to cohere, make choriambic cadence or rhythm suggest itself more frequently than any other of the compound feet   Mr Swinburne wrote intentional and continuous choriambics of great beauty

CODA ("tail") —A musical term used in prosody by analogy, and signifying a final stanza or batch of verses, often couched in a form differing from the rest of the poem, such, for instance, as the final octave of *Lycidas*

COMMON —The quantity or quality in a syllable which makes it susceptible of occupying either the position of a "long" one or that of a "short"   This gift, well recognised and frequent enough in Greek and Latin prosody—especially in regard to Greek proper names,—is still more widely spread in English   Almost all monosyllables, other than nouns, are common, and in a very large number of others the syllable can be raised or lowered to long or short by considerations of arsis, thesis, stress, emphasis, position, etc,

COMMON MEASURE (for shortness, especially in reference to hymns, "C M ")—The same as ballad metre, but usually restricted to eights and sixes without substitution. (See also below, Chapter IV)

CONSONANCE — In strictness merely "agreement of sound ", but sometimes used to designate *full* rhyme by vowel *and* consonant, as opposed to " "assonance," *i e* rhyme by vowel only

COUPLET —In proper English use this refers to a pair of verses only , and it probably should be, though it is not always, limited to cases where the members of the pair are exactly similar, as in the heroic couplet, the octosyllabic couplet The original French word is much more elastic, and is applied to the long mono-rhymed *tirades* of Old French poems, to stanzas of more verses than two, and even to whole lyrics, usually of a light description   (See also DISTICH)

CRETIC —See AMPHIMACER

DACTYL —A trisyllabic foot—long, short, short $(- \smile \smile)$ This foot, thanks to the great position of the dactylic hexameter in Greek and Latin, disputes, in those prosodies, the place of principal staple with the iambic , and, from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, almost constant endeavours have been made at imitating that metre in English, and consequently at working the dactyl in our language It was, however, early discovered, even by favourers of classical "versing," that there is something awkward about the English dactyl And in fact, though we have a very large number of words which are fair dactyls regarded separately, they are no sooner set in a verse than they seem to slip or waggle into other measures, and especially the anapæst When, by some chance or by some sleight of the poet, they are found, they are usually either continuous, or in connection with, and substituted for, the trochee To the classical combination of dactyl and spondee English is obstinately rebellious.

DI-IAMB —A double iamb—short, long, short, long

$(\smile - \smile -)$. Not wanted in English , and not even express-ing, as some of the four-syllable feet do, a quasi-real compound effect

DIMETER —A combination of two couples of the same foot, iambic, trochaic, or anapæstic Thus the ordinary octosyllable is an iambic dimeter, and the familiar swinging four-foot anapæst, a dimeter anapæstic. In ancient prosody, "-meter" was never used in this kind of combination, with reference to *single-feet* metres, unless these feet were in places specifically different Thus "hexameter" means a line of six single feet, of which, though the first four may vary, the fifth must normally be a dactyl and the sixth a spondee , "pentameter," a line of five feet, dactyls or spondees, but rigidly distributed in two halves of two and a half feet each Of late years, in modern English prosody-writing, though fortunately not universally, a most objectionable habit has grown up of calling the heroic line a "pentameter," the octosyllabic iambic a "tetrameter" This is grossly unscholarly, and should never be imitated, for the proper meaning of the terms would be *ten* feet in the one case, *eight* in the other

DISPONDEE —Double spondee $(- - - -)$ Even more than the di-iamb, and much more than the ditrochee, this combination is not wanted in English

DISTICH —A synonym for "couplet," but of wider range, as there is no reason why the verses should be metrically similar There is, however,' in the practical use of the word, an understanding that there shall be a certain completeness and self-containedness of *sense*

DITROCHEE —A double trochee—long, short, long, short $(- \smile - \smile)$ —The remarks on the di-iamb apply here, but not quite so strongly There are a few exceptional cases

$- \smile - \smile$

in Milton, as in the famous "Universal reproach," where the ditrochaic effect, whether beautiful or not, is too notice-able not to deserve specific definition

DOCHMIAC —A foot of five syllables, admitting, with the possible permutations of long and short in the five

places, a large number of variations. This foot, not strictly necessary even in Greek prosody, is quite unknown in English, and, if used, would simply split itself up into batches of two and three But it probably has a real existence in the systematisation of English *prose* rhythm

DOGGEREL —A word (the derivation of which can be only, though easily, guessed) as old as Chaucer, always used with depreciating intent, but with a certain difference, not to say looseness, of exact connotation Doggerel is often applied to slipshod or sing-song verse , sometimes to verse burlesque or feeble in sense and phrase But it is better restricted to verse metrically incompetent by false rhythm and quantification, or by insufficient or superfluous provision of syllables and the like

DUPLE —A term used by some prosodists in combination with "time" and in contradistinction to "triple," to express a characteristic of verse which is nearest to music, and which perhaps is musical rather than really prosodic Controversies are sometimes carried on in regard to the question whether trisyllabic feet (such as anapæsts, dactyls, and tribrachs) are, when substituted for dissyllabic, in "duple" or in "triple" time , but this question appears to the present writer irrelevant and extraneous.

ELISION —The obliteration of a syllable, for metrical reasons, when a vowel at the end of a word comes before one at the beginning of another This strict classical meaning of the term is extended ordinarily, in the English use of it, to the omission of a syllable within a word, or the fusion of two in any of the various ways indicated by the classical terms *crasis* ("mixture"), *thlipsis* ("crushing"), *syncope* ("cutting short"), *synalœpha* ("smearing together"), *synizesis* ("setting together"), *synecphonesis* ("combined utterance"), and others Perhaps the most useful phraseology in English indicates "elision" for actual *vanishing* of a vowel (when it is usually represented by an apostrophe), and "slur" for running of two into one These two processes are of extreme importance, for upon the view

taken of them turns the view to be held of Shakespeare's
and Milton's blank verse, and of a large number of other
measures

END-STOPPED —A term largely applied, especially in
Shakespearian discussion, to the peculiar self-contained
verse which is noticeable in the early stage of blank-verse
writing, and which Shakespeare was one of the first to
break through In the text of the present volume this
form is called "single-moulded," its characteristics not
appearing to be confined to the end

ENJAMBMENT —An Englishing, on simple analogy, of the
French technical term, *enjambement*, for the overlapping,
in sense and utterance, of one verse on another, or of one
couplet on another Enjambment of the couplet appears in
Chaucer and other writers early , was overdone and abused
in the first half of the seventeenth century , was rejected
by the later seventeenth and still more by the eighteenth,
but restored to favour by the Romantic movement.

ENVOI —The *coda* of a *ballade*, etc , with the especial
purpose of *addressing* the poem to its subject

EPANAPHORA ("referring" or "repetition") —The
repetition of the same word or group of words at the
beginning of successive lines This, originally a rhetorical
figure, becomes, especially with some of the Elizabethans
and with Tennyson, a not unimportant prosodic device ,
and, in the hands of the latter, assists powerfully in the
construction of the verse-paragraph

EPANORTHOSIS ("setting up again," with a sense also
of "correction") —Also a rhetorical figure, and meaning
the repetition of some word, *not* necessarily at the beginning
of clause or line This also can be made of considerable
prosodic effect , for repetition, especially if including some
slight change, is necessarily associated with emphasis, and
this emphasis colours and weights the line variously

EPITRITE —A four-syllabled foot consisting of three
long syllables and one short $(- - - \cup)$. The shifting of
this latter from place to place makes four different kinds
of epitrite. Like its congeners, it is not needed in English

poetry, though spondaic substitution (in the trochaic tetrameter, etc) may sometimes simulate it, and the fact that few English words have clusters of definitely long syllables makes it rare even in prose.

EPODE.—The third and last member of the typical choric arrangement in a regular ode. See STROPHE

EQUIVALENCE means, prosodically, the quality or faculty which fits one combination of syllables for substitution in the place of another to perform the part of foot, as the dactyl and spondee do to each other in the classical hexameter, and as various feet do to the iamb in the Greek iambic trimeter and other metres   It is, with its correlative, Substitution itself, the most important principle in English prosody, it emerges almost at once, and, though at times frowned upon in theory, never loses its hold upon practice

EYE-RHYME —A practice (most largely resorted to by Spenser, but to some extent by others) of adjusting the spellings of the final syllables of words so as to make the rhyme clear to the eye as well as to the ear   It is sometimes forced, and perhaps never ought to be necessary, but it is so associated with the beauties of the *Faerie Queene* as to become almost a beauty in itself, though hardly to be recommended for imitation

FEMININE RHYME—FEMININE ENDING —Terms applied to the use of words at the end of a line with the final (now mute) *e*   "Feminine" rhyme is sometimes extended to double rhyme in general, but this is not strictly correct

"FINGERING "—A term used in this book for the single and peculiar turn and colour given to metre by the individual poet

FOOT —The admitted constituent of all classical prosody, and, according to one system (that adopted preferentially in this book), of English likewise, though with variations necessitated by the language   "Foot" (πούς, *pes*) is "that upon which the verse runs or marches "   A Greek foot is made of Greek "long " and "short " syllables,

an English foot of English   The possible combinations of these have Greek names which are convenient, and the fact that the conditions of "length" and "shortness" are different in the two languages need cause no misunderstanding whatever   But a comparatively small number are actually found in English poetry   All, however, are separately described in this Glossary, and for convenience' sake a tabular view of them is given on the next page

It should, moreover, perhaps be added that, at most periods of English poetry, monosyllabic feet, such as hardly exist in classical prosody, are undoubtedly present These can be regarded, if any one pleases, as made up to dissyllabic value by the addition of a pause or interval Nor is there any valid objection to the admission of a " pause foot" entirely composed of silence.   These two kinds of feet, however, are comparatively rare, and require no specific names

FOURTEENER — A line of seven iambic feet which emerges as almost the first equivalent of the old long A S line in English, as early as the *Moral Ode*, etc   At first it is oftenest a "*fif*teener," from the presence of the final *e*; but this drops off   Very largely used by Robert of Gloucester and others in the late thirteenth century, varied in *Gamelyn*, much mixed up with the doggerel of the fifteenth, frequent in the sixteenth, both alone and as "poulter's" measure, and splendidly used by Chapman in his translation of the *Iliad*   Sometimes employed to vary heroic couplet by Dryden   A favourite metre ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century.   Splits into "ballad-measure"

GALLIAMBIC — A classical metre of which the most famous, and only substantive, example is the magnificent *Atys* of Catullus, but which has been imitated in two fine English poems, Tennyson's great *Boadicea* and Mr George Meredith's *Phaethon*   Both of these have given a rather trochaic-dactylic swing to the metre, which is probably unavoidable in English   The *late Mr Grant Allen

TABLE OF FEET

Feet of Two Syllables	Of Three	Of Four	Of Five
Iamb, ᴗ – Pyrrhic, ᴗ ᴗ Spondee, – – Trochee, – ᴗ (The trochee ("running foot") was sometimes also called "choree," χορεῖος, or χόριος ('dancing foot'), and this form appears in "*choriambic*")	Amphibrach, ᴗ – ᴗ Anapæst, ᴗ ᴗ – Anti-Bacchic, ᴗ – – Bacchic, – – ᴗ Cretic, – ᴗ – Dactyl, – ᴗ ᴗ Molossus, – – – Tribrach, ᴗ ᴗ ᴗ (The Cretic was also called amphi*macer*, its arrangement being just the opposite to the amphibrach)	Antispast, ᴗ – – ᴗ Choriamb, – ᴗ ᴗ – Di-iamb, ᴗ – ᴗ – Dispondee, – – – – Ditrochee, – ᴗ – ᴗ Epitrite (four forms) { – ᴗ – – / – – ᴗ – / – – – ᴗ } Ionic *a majore*, – – ᴗ ᴗ ,, *a minore*, ᴗ ᴗ – – Pæon (four forms) { – ᴗ ᴗ ᴗ / ᴗ – ᴗ ᴗ / ᴗ ᴗ – ᴗ / ᴗ ᴗ ᴗ – } Proceleusmatic, ᴗ ᴗ ᴗ ᴗ	Dochmiac (See under head)

endeavoured to make out, and attempted in his translation
of the *Atys*, an iambic basis with anapæstic and tribrachic
substitution, but unsuccessfully   Ionic *a minore* (*v. inf.*) is
the ancient suggestion, and, with an accentual liberty not
unsuitable to its half-barbaric associations, it fits Catullus
pretty well   But Ionics, as has been said, do not suit
English (*v inf* p 285, *note*)

GEMELL or GEMINEL (" twin ") —Terms applied by
Drayton to the heroic couplet.

HEAD-RHYME —A name sometimes applied—it may be
thought unjustifiably, and beyond all question in a way
likely to mislead—to alliteration   See RHYME

HENDECASYLLABLE —An eleven-syllabled line   There
is a classical metre specially so called, executed with
particular success by Catullus, and imitated by Tennyson
in the piece describing it

> So fantastical is the dainty metre

But the term is not infrequently used of the staple
Italian line, of English heroic or decasyllabic lines with
redundance, etc   .

HEPTAMETER —It is rather doubtful whether the word
is wanted in English, for if applied to the fourteener it
would (see METRE and DIMETER) be a complete misnomer;
and not less so, according to correct analogy, if applied to
the seven-foot anapæst, where it would properly designate
fourteen feet or forty-two possible syllables—a length which
not even Mr Swinburne has attempted   He himself,
however, by oversight, used it of this line, which is
properly a tetrameter brachycatalectic

HEROIC —A word applied, with only indirect propriety,
to the decasyllabic or five-foot couplet, and with hardly any
propriety at all to the single line of the same construction,
but occasionally convenient in each case   The origin of
the employment is the use of this line and couplet in the
" heroic " poem and " heroic " play of the seventeenth
century   It has therefore the same sort of justification as

" Alexandrine "   There was also an earlier habit, as in
Dante's *De Vulg Eloq*, of calling it (in its Italian or
hendecasyllabic form) the " noblest " or most dignified line ,
and this connects itself with the Greek practice of calling
the hexameter—the *Epic*-verse—" heroic "

HEXAMETER —The great staple metre of Greek and
Latin epic, in which the line consists of six feet, dactyls or
spondees at choice for the first four, but normally always a
dactyl in the fifth and always a spondee in the sixth—the
latter foot being by special licence sometimes allowed in
the fifth also (in which case the line is called spondaic),
but never a dactyl in the sixth   To this metre, and to the
attempts to imitate it in English, the term should be strictly
confined, and never applied to the Alexandrine or iambic
trimeter

HIATUS —The juxtaposition of vowels either in the
same word, or, more especially, at the end of one word
and the beginning of the next   At different times, and in
different languages, this has been regarded as a beauty and
as a defect , but in English it entirely depends upon
circumstances whether it is one, or the other, or neither
For a considerable period—roughly from 1650 to 1780, if
not 1800—it was supposed—without a shadow of reason
—that English poets ought to elide one of such concurrents
and indicate it only by apostrophe, so that not merely did
" the enormous " become " th' enormous," and " to affect "
" t' affect," but " violet " was crushed into " vi'let," and
" diamond " into " di'mond "   But this has been almost
entirely abandoned, though there are still "metrical fictions"
on the subject.

IAMBIC —A foot of two syllables—short, long ($\smile$ –)—the
commonest in almost all prosodies,[1] and (though this is
sometimes denied) the staple foot of English

INVERTED STRESS —A term used by accentual or stress
prosodists to designate the substitution of a trochee for an

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[1] Professor Hardie reminds me of Quintilian's assertion (*Inst Orat.*
IX. iv 136) that even in Latin, iambs " omnibus pedibus insurgunt "

ıamb.   Unnecessary, ıf not erroneous, from the poınt of
view of thıs book

IONIC —A foot of four syllables, consıstıng of a spondee
(− −) and a pyrrhıc (◡ ◡)   Wıth the spondee first ıt ıs
called "Ionıc *a majore*", wıth the pyrrhıᴄ first, *a mınore*
Neıther movement ıs common ın Englısh verse, and, ıf ıt
were, ıt would hardly requıre any joınt name   But when
the musıc ıs uppermost, as ın "Vılıkıns and hıs Dınah,"
ıt suggests ıtself, wıth the alternatıve of the thırd pæon

    ◡ ◡ − �   ◡ ◡   − ˘   ◡ ◡ − ˘   −   −
Now as Dınah │ was a walkıng │ ın the garden │ so gay [1]

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[1] NOTE ON IONIC *A MINORE* AS APPLICABLE TO THL EPILOGUE
              OF BROWNING S *ASOLANDO*

It has been proposed to scan the beautıful last words of Robert
Brownıng—

    At the mıdnıght, ın the sılence of the sleep-tıme,
       When you set your fancıes free—
    Wıll they pass to where, by death, fools thınk, ımprisoned
       Low he lıes who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
          —Pıty me ?

as an example of Englısh Ionıc *a mınore* ,[1] not (as ıt ıs taken by the
present wrıter) as trochaıc—   .

         ◡ ◡ − ◡   ◡ ◡ − ◡   ◡ ◡   −   ˘
    At the mıdnıght │ ın the sılence │ of the sleep tıme ,

not

    − ◡   ˘   − ◡   − ◡   − ◡   −   ˘
    At the │ mıdnıght │ ın the │ sılence │ of the │ sleep tıme

Perhaps those who propose thıs have been a lıttle brıbed by conscıous
or unconscıous desıre to prevent "accentıng *ın* and *of*, but no more
need be saıd on thıs poınt   The trochees, or theır suffıcıent equıvalents,
wıll run very well wıthout any vıolent INN or OVV   But when the pıece
ıs examıned by ear of body and ear of mınd (for the mınd's ear ıs as ım-
portant as the mınd s eye) ıt wıll be found that Ionıc scansıon ıs unsatıs-
factory   It ıs perhaps not utterly fatal to the fırst lıne (though ıt gıves an
unpleasantly "rockıng-horsy" movement), and perhaps stıll less to the
second, where the catalexıs ıtself saves thıs effect to some extent   But the
junctıon and severance of sense whıch ıt suggests ın the thırd—

       ◡   ◡   −   −   ◡ ◡   −   −   ◡   ◡ −   −
    Wıll they pass to │ where, by death, fools │ thınk, ımprisoned,

---

[1] ◡ ◡ − −   Thırd pæon (◡ ◡ − ◡) has also been suggested, but
the same counter-arguments apply to ıt,

LEONINE VERSE —A term not strictly applicable to English, but sometimes found in prosody-books. It means the peculiar mediæval Latin hexameter with middle and end rhymed, as in

> Post cœnam *stabis*   seu passus mille me*abis*

Browning comes nearest to it in such lines as

> On my specked *hide*, not you the *pride*

LINE —The larger integer of verse, as the foot is the smaller, and the stanza or paragraph the largest   It is usually indicated, in printing or writing, by independent beginning and ending on the page—whence the name,— but this is accidental and arranged for convenience of the eye   As a rule, however, it should not be encroached upon lightly, and, even when enjambment is practised, the individual line should have a thinkable self-sufficiency   Nor should two lines be separated when they clamour for union, as in the case of some modern rhymeless experimenters (Mr Arnold, Mr Henley, etc) and in some of the early Elizabethans (Grimoald, Googe, and others)

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is very ugly   And this same junction or severance becomes impossible in the short lines concluding the stanzas   To suit the Ionic measure these must run—

> ∪ ∪ —
> Pity me

> ∪ ∪   —
> Being—who?

> ∪   ∪   —
> Sleep to wake

> ∪   ∪   —
> There as here,

a set of jumpy anapæsts which upsets the whole pathos and dignity of the composition when compared with " Pity | me ", " Sleep to | wake' , and " There as | here ", while it makes

> — ∪   —
> Being |—who ?

into a mere burlesque, and flies in the face of Browning's specially indicated pause,

LONG and SHORT are words which, until comparatively recently, have been taken as the bases of all prosodic analysis   They represent two values which, though no doubt by no means always identical in themselves, are invariably, unmistakably, and at once, distinguished by the ear, and the combining of which, in ordinary mathematical permutation, constitutes the feet, or lowest integers, of metrical rhythm   This nomenclature—which presents no initial difficulties, is sufficient for all practical purposes, and commends itself at once to any unprejudiced intelligence—seems first to have excited question and suspicion towards the end of the seventeenth century   It is disagreeable to both accentual and syllabic prosodists (see chapters devoted to these), and it appears to disturb some who would not class themselves with either   It is indeed quite possible to work either system with "long" and "short," applied uncontentiously to the natural values of rhythmed speech in English poetry   But a punctilio arises as to the definition of the words   "Does length," some people ask, "really mean 'duration of time' in pronouncing?"   This question, and others, seem to the present writer unnecessary   We need not decide what *makes* the difference between "long" and "short", it is sufficient that this difference unmistakably *exists*, and is felt at once   Whether it is due to accent, length of pronunciation, sharpness, loudness, strength, or anything else, is a question in no way directly affecting verse   The important things are, once more, that *it exists*, that verse cannot exist without it, that it is partly, and in English rather largely, created by the poet, but that this creation is conditioned by certain conventions of the language, of which accent is one, but only one

LONG MEASURE ("L M.") —The octosyllabic quatrain, alternately rhymed

LYDGATIAN LINE —An arrangement of extraordinary hideousness, which occurs rather frequently in Lydgate; and which has been assigned by the merciful to incompetence or carelessness; by other, critics, who defend it,

to what must have been deliberate bad taste   It is a line
of nine syllables only, the missing one being not, as in the
Chaucerian *acephala*, at the first, but occurring somewhere
in the middle, and at the cæsura   An uglier metrical
entity probably nowhere exists than such a line as

<blockquote>If an|y word | in thee | ∧ be | missaid [1]</blockquote>

MASCULINE RHYME —A rhyme where the rhyming
syllable is single, and ends in a consonant, without any
mute *e* following.   Less correctly, a monosyllabic rhyme

METRE —In the wide sense, collections of rhythm
which correspond, both within the collection, and, if
there be such, with one or more other collections adjoin-
ing   In the narrow, collections dominated by a single
foot-rhythm, as "iambic metre," "anapæstic metre," etc

MOLOSSUS —A foot of three long syllables (– – –)
Practically impossible in English *verse*, being too bulky
for a rhythm-integer with us, but admissible as a musical
arrangement.

MONOMETER —A line consisting of one foot only, or
one pair of feet   See DIMETER

MONOPRESSURE —A term invented to express a theory
that the divisions of metre are associated with, and deter-
mined by, some physical throat-conditions   Unnecessary
and unworkable

OCTAVE —A stanza of eight lines

OCTOMETER.—A term properly applied to eight-foot
dactylic metre, such as Tennyson's *Kapiolani* , improperly
to Mr. Swinburne's eight-foot anapæsts

ODE —A name used in English with great laxity, and
not perhaps to be tied down too much without loss   The
word itself, in Greek, means simply a song   But the choric
odes of the Greek dramatists, and the non-dramatic odes of
Pindar, being couched in a peculiar form—irregular at first
sight, but exactly correspondent when examined,—have

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[1] It would become tolerable as a four foot anapæst, and perhaps partly
suggested such a line , also as an octosyllable with substitution

created a certain tendency to restrict the term ode, sometimes with the epithet "regular," to things similar in English (see, in list of poets, Cowley, Congreve, Gray). On the other hand, the Latins—especially Horace, whose influence has been even wider—extend the term to pieces in short, obviously regular stanzas identically repeated, and the majority of English odes are of this kind

OTTAVA RIMA—A special form of octave derived from the Italians, and composed of eight decasyllabic lines rhymed *abababcc*   There are other decasyllabic octaves, such as that used by Chaucer in the *Monk's Tale*, and by Spenser after him, with or without that adoption of the Alexandrine which turns it into the Spenserian.

PÆON —A foot of four syllables—one long and three short—arranged in varying order   The commonest English foot in rhythmical prose, but unnecessary in English verse.

PAUSE —A break in the line as metrically read or heard, which is almost always coincident with the end of a word, and which very frequently, but not always or so often as in the former case, coincides with a stop in punctuation   It is not necessary that every line should have a pause , and the place of the pause, when it exists, is practically *ad libitum* in most, if not all lines, while there may be more pauses than one   The attempt to curtail liberty in these three respects has been the cause of some of the worst mistakes about English prosody, especially when it takes the form of prescribing that the pause should always be as near the middle as possible   Variety of pause is, in fact, next to variety of feet, the great secret of success in our verse , and it is owing to this that Shakespeare and Milton more especially stand so high. On the other hand, this variety requires the most careful adjustment , and if such adjustment is neglected, the lines will be uglier than continuously middle-paused ones, though not so monotonous

PENTAMETER —See DIMETER.   As properly used, a line of five feet—dactyls or spondees—divided into two batches

)

of two and a half each   As improperly used, a five-foot iambic line in English

(PINDARIC)—Strictly the regular ode (see STROPHE) of Greek poetry , but extended by, and still more in imitation of, Cowley to any lyrical composition in irregularly rhymed stanzas of different line-lengths   According to Dryden, the Alexandrine line, frequent in Cowley's odes, was so-called, " but," he most properly adds, "improperly "

POSITION —In the classical prosodies a short or common vowel before two consonants (but not every two) was said to be long "by position " , and efforts have been made to determine English quantity in the same way   No rule of the kind can be laid down , doubled or grouped consonants after a vowel usually shortening the pronunciation, and sometimes lengthening the value

POULTER'S MEASURE —A term used by Gascoigne, and said to be derived from the practice of poulter[er]s in giving twelve to the dozen in one case and thirteen or fourteen in another   It is applied to the combination of Alexandrine and fourteener which was such a favourite with the earlier Tudor poets, and which broke up into the "Short Measure " of the hymn-books

PROCELEUSMATIC —A double pyrrhic, or foot of four short syllables ($\smile$ $\smile$ $\smile$ $\smile$)   Not needed, if not also impossible, in English

PYRRHIC —Foot of two short syllables ($\smile$ $\smile$)   Very doubtfully found in English , but not impossible

QUANTITY —That which fits a syllable for its place as "long " or " short " in a verse

QUARTET or QUATRAIN —A group of four lines usually, indeed with the rarest exceptions, united in themselves, and separated from others, by rhyme

QUINTET —A similar group of five lines

REDUNDANCE —An extra syllable at the end of the line, not strictly part of its last foot.

REFRAIN.—A line recurring identically, or with very slight alteration, at the end of every stanza of a poem. Probably one of the oldest of all poetic features—certainly one of the oldest in English　The same as "burden"　Refrains or burdens are not uncommonly meaningless collections of musical-sounding words

RHYME.—The arrangement of two word-endings—identical in vowel and following consonant or consonants, but not having the same consonant *before* the vowel—at the conclusion of two or more lines, or sometimes within the lines themselves.

RHYME-ROYAL —The stanza of seven decasyllabic lines, rhymed *ababbcc*, which occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus*, and which traditionally derives its name from its use in *The King's Quair*, though its extreme popularity for a long period is perhaps the real reason.

RHYTHM.—An orderly arrangement, but not necessarily a correspondent succession, of sounds

RIDING RHYME —An old name for the decasyllabic couplet, obviously derived from its appearance in Chaucer's Tales of Pilgrims "riding" to Canterbury

RIME COUÉE or TAILED RHYME — Translations in French and English of the Latin *versus caudatus*, and not very happy from the English point of view, though justified by origin (see Origin-List)　The verse to which they refer is the sixain of two eights, a six, two more eights, and another six　Two tails are not common in English *fauna* , and one might prefer to call the verse "waisted and tailed " It is, however, in the old Romances (where it is common, and from its commonness in which it is better called the "Romance six ") often found in multiples of three other than six , and it is at the batch of three that the title looks—the couplet of eights constituting the body, and the odd six the tail

ROMANCE-SIX —See RIME COUÉE

RONDEAU—RONDEL.—French (and English) forms in which lines are repeated at regular intervals.

SAPPHIC —A classical metre consisting of three longer lines and one shorter (called an Adonic) arranged in the following scheme —

$$- \cup - - - \cup \cup - \cup - \triangledown$$
$$- \cup - - - \cup \cup - \cup - \triangledown$$
$$- \cup - - - \cup \cup - \cup - \triangledown$$
$$- \cup \cup - \triangledown$$

It has been frequently tried in English, both as burlesque and seriously   For the former use (as in Canning's immortal "Needy Knife-Grinder ") it is, like most classical metres, well suited, though the true Greek and even Latin rhythm is generally (*v sup* p 124) violated   In serious verse Mr Swinburne has produced exquisite and others (as Watts and Cowper) respectable examples , but even the best is a *tour de force* only

SECTION —A term not useless in its general sense as denoting verse divisions larger than a foot , but now prejudicially preoccupied by Guest (*v sup* p 254, *note*) and others

SEPTENAR —A word applied (very undesirably) by most German and a few English writers to the fourteener or seven-foot iambic

SEPTET —A verse or stanza of seven lines

SESTET, also SIXAIN —A verse or stanza of six lines

SESTINE, SESTINA —A very elaborate measure invented by the Provençal poet Arnaut Daniel, imitated by Dante and other Italians, tried inexactly by Spenser, and sometimes recently attempted in English

SHORT MEASURE ("S M ") — The split-up poulter's measure or quartet of 6, 6, 8, 6

SINGLE-MOULDED —The term used in this book to describe the early blank-verse line, which appears to be constructed complete in itself, without any expectation of, or preparation for, continuance   See END-STOPPED

SKELTONIC —The peculiar kind of (generally short) line used by Skelton.   Its commonest form is an anapæstic monometer (*i e.* two feet), often much further cut down by dissyllabic and monosyllabic substitution or by catalexis,

but sometimes extended   It is always rhymed, sometimes
on the same rhyme for several lines together.   Though
usually called "doggerel," it does not quite deserve that
name as defined above   See also note p 297

SLUR —See ELISION.

(SONNET)—A word sometimes, in former days, loosely
applied to any short poem, especially of an amatory nature,
often nowadays almost as improperly limited to a special
Italian form of the true sonnet   This latter is a poem of
fourteen lines, of the same length generally and (except by
exception) decasyllables (originally, of course, *hen*deca-
syllables) arranged in varying rhyme-schemes   Its exact
origin is unknown, but it is first found in Italian-Sicilian
poets of the thirteenth century, and it became enormously
popular in Italy very soon   It did not spread northward
for a considerable time, the first French sonnets occurring
not very early in the sixteenth century, the first English,
not till near its middle   A great sonnet-outburst took
place at the end of that century with us, but the form fell
into disuse in the seventeenth, though championed by
Milton, and it was not till the extreme end of the
eighteenth century that it became, and has since remained,
something of a staple   Partly the absence of the Italian
plethora of similar endings, and partly something else,
made the earliest English practitioners select an arrange-
ment with final rhymed couplet, the twelve remaining lines
being usually arranged in rhymed, but not rhyme-linked,
quatrains   and this form, immortalised by Shakespeare, is
probably the best suited to English   It is, at any rate,
absolutely genuine and orthodox there   But Milton,
Wordsworth, and especially Dante and Christina Rossetti,
have given examples of the sonnets which, divided mostly
into octave and sestet, have this latter arranged in inter-
twisted rhymes   This form is susceptible of great beauty,
but has no prerogative, still less any primogeniture, in our
poetry

SPENSERIAN —See Origin-List

SPONDEE.—A foot of two long syllables (– –).   Its

presence in English has been denied, but most strangely, its condition is, in fact, exactly opposite to that of the dactyl In single and separate words its representatives are chiefly compounds like " moonshine," " humdrum," etc.   But, as formed out of different words, it is frequent

STANZA or STAVE —A collection of lines arranged in an ordered batch and generally on some definite rhyme-scheme Also designated by one of the loose senses of " verse "

STRESS —Generally, though not universally, used as synonymous with accent, but somewhat differently applied, " accent " being regarded as something more or less permanent in the word, " stress " something added specially in the verse   By extension of this, numerous arbitrary and fanciful systems of prosody have been recently devised

STRESS-UNIT —A recent instance, and one of the worst, of the new terms invented to avoid the use of " foot " For, almost more than any other, it ignores the importance of non-stressed syllables

STROPHE —The stanza-unit of Greek odic or choric arrangement   The system is triple—strophe, antistrophe, and epode—and will be found fully illustrated and scanned from Gray (*v sup* pp 89-91)

SUBSTITUTION —See EQUIVALENCE

SYNALŒPHA ⎫
SYNCOPE   ⎬—See ELISION
SYNIZESIS ⎭

SYZYGY —A term of classical prosody which has a perfectly strict meaning—the yoking of two feet into a metrical batch (see DIMETER)   It has, in some recent cases, been rather unfortunately extended to other forms of combining syllables, sounds, etc   As thus used it is not needed, and is likely to cause confusion.

TAILED SONNET —An Italian lengthening of the sonnet to eighteen or twenty lines, sometimes practised in English, the best known example being Milton's , but not very admirable in our language, and not at all necessary   Even in Italian the use is largely burlesque.

TERCET —A group of three lines like TRIPLET, but specially limited to that used in TERZA RIMA.

TERZA RIMA —A verse-arrangement by which, in a group of three lines, the first and third rhyme together, while the middle is left to rhyme with the first and third of the next batch   This arrangement, very effective in Italian, and undoubtedly one of the chief elements of the magnificence of Dante's prosody, has never been really successful in English   Some of the best examples are Shelley's, the earliest, after some fragments in Chaucer, are Wyatt's, the largest continuous employment is in Canon Dixon's *Mano*

TETRAMETER —A term improperly applied to the octosyllable, properly to divers long lines of eight iambs, anapæsts, or trochees

THESIS —See ARSIS

TIME —A "word of fear" in prosody, as it is almost always a "voice prophesying war"   Used merely in the sense of "rhythm," it is quite innocuous, and construed generally, as when Southey says that "two short syllables take up only the time of one," there need be no harm in it   But when absolute "duration" is insisted on, and people discuss whether this can be given by that or the other means, great and unnecessary mischief is likely to be done

TRIBRACH.—A foot of three short syllables ($\smile \smile \smile$). Very frequent in later English, perhaps less so in earlier

TRIOLET —A short French form of the rondeau, in the most common variety of which the first of eight lines is repeated in the fourth and seventh, the second being also repeated in the eighth, so that there are only *five* lines of independent sense (See example, p. 125)

TRIPLE —See DUPLE

TRIPLET —A group of three lines, most commonly used of three which rhyme together   See TERCET

TROCHEE —A foot of two syllables—long, short ($- \smile$). The complement · contrast of the iamb; an invaluable variant upon it, the best introducer (by admitting it as

a substitute) of the dactyl in English, and very effective by itself when properly managed

TRUNCATION —The lopping off of a syllable at beginning or end of line   This in the latter case equals what is here called CATALEXIS (*q v*), and in the former is often better accounted for by a monosyllabic foot   But there are cases, as in Chaucer's "acephalous" lines, where it is not inapplicable

TUMBLING VERSE —A phrase of King James the Sixth (First) in his prosodic treatise, which has caused, or at least been connected with, difficulties (see CADENCE)   He seems to have meant by it nothing more than the loose half-doggerel anapæsts which were so common in the first two-thirds of the sixteenth century

TURN OF WORDS —A phrase specially used in the seventeenth century for the repetition, identically or with little change, of the same words at the end of a line and the beginning of the next

VERSE —A word used with unfortunate, though perhaps unavoidable, ambiguity   It is employed first (and best) of writing in general as opposed to prose, secondly, of a single line of poetry, thirdly, of a batch of lines, while there is even a fourth use, now obsolete, but common in the Elizabethans, by which it applied to classical unrhymed metres in English   This last, one may hope, will never be revived   Of the others, the first and third are indispensable and can cause no real confusion   But, though a fairly strong case can be made out for "verse" in the sense of "line," the inconvenience and confusion of this use should be held to prohibit it

VERSE PARAGRAPH.—A very important development of blank verse, ensuring to it almost all the advantages of stanza in some ways, and more than all in others   First reached by Shakespeare in drama, and by Milton in non-dramatic verse, it consists in so knitting a batch of blank-verse lines together by variation of pause, alternate use of stop and enjambment, and close connection of sense, that

neither eye nor voice is disposed to make serious halt till the close of the paragraph is reached   Thus an effect of concerted music is produced through the whole of it   No one has ever been a great master of blank verse without being a master of this device ; but perhaps the most special and elaborate command of it has been Tennyson's

VOWEL-MUSIC —In a certain sense vowel-music may be said to be, and always to have been, a main, if not the main, source of the pleasure given to the ear by poetry Nor, it may also be said, can any accomplished poet ever have been indifferent to it   Deliberate attention to it, however, has varied much at different times of English poetry, and was perhaps at its lowest in the eighteenth, at its highest in the nineteenth, century

WEAK ENDING —A technical term used by not a few prosodists, but not adopted in this book, for redundance As a matter of fact a line is often much stronger for the extra syllable

WRENCHED ACCENT —A term applied, by accentual prosodists, sometimes to signify removal of accent on a word from the usual place , sometimes to the presence of an unaccented syllable where they expect an accented, or the reverse   In the first sense it is unobjectionable , in the second, always unnecessary, and often suggestive of misdescription of the results of ordinary substitution [1]

[1] *Note (Second Edition) on " Skeltonic," v sup* p 293 —Attempts have been made to trace it to the very short lines used by Martial d'Auvergne (*c* 1420–1508) and, perhaps, other French poets   But, as in some similar cases these attempts ignore radical differences, such as the presence of the anapæst in English and its absence from French, and others still.

CHAPTER II

ARNOLD, MATTHEW (1822-1888) —Made various attempts
(outside of his classical drama *Merope*) at rhymeless metres
in English   Countenanced the English hexameter   Also
made, but abandoned, experiments in the enjambed
couplet, which anticipated William Morris

BARHAM, RICHARD H ("Thomas Ingoldsby") (1788-
1845) —Showed the greatest proficiency in light, loose
metres of the anapæstic division, and exercised much
influence by them, owing to the wide and long-sustained
popularity of the *Ingoldsby Legends* (1840, but earlier in
magazines)

BEAUMONT, SIR JOHN (1583-1623) —One of the earliest
(before 1625) practitioners, and perhaps the very earliest
champion in verse itself, of the stopped couplet exactly
arranged

BLAKE, WILLIAM (1757-1827) —Although Blake's im-
mediate and direct influence must have been small, there
is hardly any poet who exhibits the tendency of his time
in metre more variously and vehemently   In his unhesi-
tating and brilliantly successful use of substitution in
octosyllabic couplet, ballad measure, and lyrical adjust-
ments of various kinds, as well as in *media* varying from
actual verse to the rhythmed prose of his "Prophetic" books,
Blake struck definitely away from the monotonous and
select metres of the eighteenth century, and anticipated

the liberty, multiplicity, and variety of the nineteenth
And he differed, almost equally, from all but one or two
of his older contemporaries, and from most of his younger
for many years, in the colour and "fingering" of his
verse.

BOWLES, WILLIAM LISLE (1762-1850) — A generally
mediocre poet, who, however, deserves a place of honour
here for the sonnets which he published in 1789, and
which had an immense influence on Coleridge, Southey,
and others of his juniors, not merely in restoring that
great form to popularity, but by inculcating description and
study of nature in connection with the thoughts and
passions of men

BROWNE, WILLIAM (1591-1643) — A Jacobean poet of
the loosely named Spenserian school—effective in various
metres, but a special and early exponent of the enjambed
couplet

BROWNING, ELIZABETH BARRETT (1806-1861) — Re-
markable here for her adoption of the nineteenth-century
principle of the widest possible metrical experiment and
variety   In actual *metre* effective, though sometimes a
little slipshod   In rhyme a portent and a warning
Perhaps the worst rhymester in the English language—
perpetrating, and attempting to defend on a mistaken view
of assonance, cacophonies so hideous that they need not
sully this page

BROWNING, ROBERT (1812-1889) — Often described as
a loose and rugged metrist, and a licentious, if not criminal,
rhymester   Nothing of the sort   Extraordinarily bold in
both capacities, and sometimes, perhaps, as usually happens
in these cases, a little too bold , but in metre practically
never, in rhyme very seldom (and then only for purposes
of designed contrast, like the farce in tragedy), overstepping
actual bounds   A great master of broken metres, internal
rhyme, heavily equivalenced lines, and all the *tours de
force* of English prosody

BURNS, ROBERT (1759-1796) — Of the very greatest
importance in historical prosody, because of the shock

which his fresh dialect administered to the conventional poetic diction of the eighteenth century, and his unusual and broken measures (especially the famous Burns-metre) to its notions of metric   An admirable performer on the strings that he tried , a master of musical "fingering" of verse , and to some extent a pioneer of the revival of substitution

  BYRON, GEORGE GORDON, LORD (1788-1824) —Usually much undervalued as a prosodist, even by those who admire him as a poet   Really of great importance in this respect, owing to the variety, and in some cases the novelty, of his accomplishment, and to its immense popularity   His Spenserians in *Childe Harold* not of the highest class, but the light octaves of *Beppo* and *Don Juan* the very best examples of the metre in English Some fine but rhetorical blank verse, and a great deal of fluent octosyllabic couplet imitated from Scott   But his lyrics of most importance, combining popular appeal with great variety, and sometimes positive novelty, of adjustment and cadence   Diction is his weakest point.

  • CAMPBELL, THOMAS (1777-1844) — Not prosodically remarkable in his longer poems, but very much so in some of his shorter, especially "The Battle of the Baltic," where the bold shortening of the last line, effective in itself, has proved suggestive to others of even better things, such as the half-humorous, half-plaintive measure of Holmes's "The Last Leaf" and Locker's "Grandmamma"

  CAMPION, THOMAS (?-1619) —Equally remarkable for the sweetness and variety of his rhymed lyrics in various ordinary measures, and as the advocate and practitioner of a system of rhymeless verse, different from the usual hexametrical attempts of his contemporaries, but still adjusted to classical patterns

  CANNING, GEORGE (1770-1827) —Influential, in the general breaking-up of the conventional metres and diction of the eighteenth century, by his parodies of Darwin and his light lyrical pieces in the *Anti-Jacobin.*

CHAMBERLAYNE, WILLIAM (1619-1689) —Remarkable as, in *Pharonnida*, one of the chief exponents of the beauties, but still more of the dangers, of the enjambed heroic couplet, in his *England's Jubile* as a rather early, and by no means unaccomplished, practitioner of the rival form   To be carefully distinguished from his contemporary, Robert Chamberlain (*fl c* 1640), a very poor poetaster who wrote a few English hexameters

CHATTERTON, THOMAS (1752-1770) — Of some interest here because his manufactured diction was a protest against the conventional language of eighteenth-century poetry   Of more, because he ventured upon equivalence in octosyllabic couplet, and wrote ballad and other lyrical stanzas, entirely different in form and cadence from those of most of his contemporaries, and less artificial even than those of Collins and Gray

CHAUCER, GEOFFREY (1340?-1400) —The reducer of the first stage of English prosody to complete form and order, the greatest master of prosodic harmony in our language before the later sixteenth century, and one of the greatest (with value for capacity in language) of all time, the introducer of the decasyllabic couplet—if not absolutely, yet systematically and on a large scale—and of the seven-lined "rhyme-royal" stanza, and, finally, a poet whose command of the utmost prosodic possibilities of English, at the time of his writing, almost necessitated a temporary prosodic disorder, when those who followed attempted to imitate him with a changed pronunciation, orthography, and word-store

CLEVELAND, JOHN (1613-1658) —Of no great importance as a poet, but holding a certain position as a comparatively early experimenter with apparently anapæstic measures in his "Mark Antony" and other pieces

. COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR (1772-1834) —In the *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, the great instaurator of equivalence and substitution, a master of many other kinds of metre, and an experimenter in classical versing

COLLINS, WILLIAM (1721-1759)—Famous in prosody

for his attempt at odes less definitely "regular" than Gray's, but a vast improvement on the loose Pindaric which had preceded , and for a remarkable attempt at rhymeless verse in that "To Evening" In diction retained a good deal of artificiality

CONGREVE, WILLIAM   (1670 - 1729) — Regularised Cowley's loose Pindaric.

COWLEY, ABRAHAM (1618-1667) —The most popular poet of the mid-seventeenth century , important to prosody for a wide, various, and easy, though never quite consummate command of lyric, as well as for a vigorous and effective couplet (with occasional Alexandrines) of a kind midway between that of the early seventeenth century and Dryden's , but chiefly for his introduction of the so-called Pindaric   •

COWPER, WILLIAM (1731-1800) —One of the first to protest, definitely and by name, against the "mechanic art" of Pope's couplet   He himself returned to Dryden for that metre , but practised very largely in blank verse, and wrote lyrics with great sweetness, a fairly varied command of metre, and, in "Boadicea," "The Castaway," and some of his hymns, no small intensity of tone and cry   His chief shortcoming, a preference of elision to substitution

DONNE, JOHN (1573-1631) —Famous for the beauty of his lyrical poetry, the "metaphysical" strangeness of his sentiment and diction throughout, and the roughness of his couplets   This last made Jonson, who thought him "the first poet in the world for some things," declare that he nevertheless "deserved hanging for not keeping accent," and has induced others to suppose a (probably imaginary) revolt against Spenserian smoothness, and an attempt at a new prosody

DRAYTON, MICHAEL (1563-1631) —A very important poet prosodically, representing the later Elizabethan school as it passes into the Jacobean, and even the Caroline.   Expresses and exemplifies the demand for the couplet (which he calls "gemell" or "geminel"), but is an adept in

stanzas   In the *Polyolbion* produced the only long English poem in continuous Alexandrines before Browning's *Fifine at the Fair* (which is very much shorter)   A very considerable sonneteer, and the deviser of varied and beautiful lyrical stanzas in short rhythms, the most famous being the "Ballad of Agincourt"

DRYDEN, JOHN (1630-1700) —The establisher and master of the stopped heroic couplet with variations of triplets and Alexandrines, the last great writer of dramatic blank verse, after he had given up the couplet for that use, master also of any other metre—the stopped heroic quatrain, lyrics of various form, etc —that he chose to try   A deliberate student of prosody, on which he had intended to leave a treatise, but did not

DIXON, RICHARD WATSON (1833-1900) —The only English poet who has attempted, and (as far perhaps as the thing is possible) successfully carried out, a long poem (*Mano*) in *terza rima*   Possessed also of great lyrical gift in various metres, especially in irregular or Pindaric arrangements

DUNBAR, WILLIAM (1450 ?-1513 ? or-1530 ?) —The most accomplished and various master of metre in Middle Scots, including both alliterative and strictly metrical forms If he wrote "The Friars of Berwick," the chief master of decasyllabic couplet between Chaucer and Spenser

DYER, JOHN (1700 ?-1758 ?) —Derives his prosodic importance from *Grongar Hill*, a poem in octosyllabic couplet, studied, with independence, from Milton, and helping to keep alive in that couplet the variety of iambic and trochaic cadence derived from catalexis, or alternation of eight- and seven-syllabled lines.

FAIRFAX, EDWARD (d 1635).—Very influential in the formation of the stopped antithetic couplet by his use of it at the close of the octaves of his translation of Tasso

FITZGERALD, EDWARD (1809-1883) —Like Fairfax, famous for the prosodic feature of his translation of the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám   This is written in deca-

syllabic quatrains, the first, second, and fourth lines rhymed together, the third left blank

FLETCHER, GILES (1588-1623), and PHINEAS (1582-1650) —Both attempted alterations of the Spenserian by leaving out first one and then two lines. Phineas also a great experimenter in other directions.

FLETCHER, JOHN (1579-1625) —The dramatist   Prosodically noticeable for his extreme leaning to redundance in dramatic blank verse   A master of lyric also.

FRERE, JOHN HOOKHAM (1769-1846) —Reintroduced the octave for comic purposes in the *Monks and the Giants* (1817), and taught it to Byron   Showed himself a master of varied metre in his translations of Aristophanes   Also dabbled in English hexameters, holding that extra-metrical syllables were permissible there   ‹

GASCOIGNE, GEORGE (1525?-1577) —Not unremarkable as a prosodist, from having tried various lyrical measures with distinct success, and as having given the first considerable piece of non-dramatic blank verse ("The Steel Glass") after Surrey   But chiefly to be mentioned for his remarkable *Notes of Instruction* on English verse, the first treatise on English prosody and a very shrewd one, despite some slips due to the time

GLOVER, RICHARD (1712-1785) —A very dull poet, but noteworthy for two points connected with prosody—his exaggeration of the Thomsonian heavy stop in the middle of blank-verse lines, and the unrhymed choruses of his *Medea*

GODRIC, SAINT (? - 1170) — The first named and known author of definitely English (that is Middle English) lyric, if not of definitely English (that is Middle English) verse altogether

GOWER, JOHN (1325?-1408) —The most productive, and perhaps the best, older master of the fluent octosyllable, rarely though sometimes varied in syllabic length, and approximating most directly to the French model.

HAMPOLE, RICHARD ₂ ROLLE OF, most commonly called

by the place - name (1290 ? -1347) —Noteworthy for the occasional occurrence of complete decasyllabic couplets in the octosyllables of the *Prick of Conscience*   Possibly the author of poems in varied lyrical measures, some of great accomplishment

HAWES, STEPHEN (d 1523 ?) —Notable for the contrast between the occasional poetry of his *Pastime of Pleasure* and its sometimes extraordinarily bad rhyme-royal—which latter is shown without any relief in his other long poem, the *Example of Virtue*   The chief late example of fifteenth-century degradation in this respect

HERRICK, ROBERT (1591 - 1674) —The best known (though not in his own or immediately succeeding times) of the "Caroline" poets.   A great master of variegated metre, and a still greater one of sweet and various grace in diction.

HUNT, J H LEIGH (1784-1859) —Chiefly remarkable prosodically for his revival of the enjambed decasyllabic couplet , but a wide student, and a catholic appreciator and practitioner, of English metre generally   Probably influenced Keats much at first

JONSON, BENJAMIN, always called BEN (1573 ?-1637) —A great practical prosodist, and apparently (like his successor, and in some respects analogue, Dryden) only by accident not a teacher of the study   Has left a few remarks, as it is, eulogising, but in rather equivocal terms, the decasyllabic couplet, objecting to Donne's "not keeping of accent," to Spenser's metre for what exact reason we know not, and to the English hexameter apparently   His practice much plainer sailing   A fine though rather hard master of blank verse , excellent at the couplet itself , but in lyric, as far as form goes, near perfection in the simpler and more classical adjustments, as well as in pure ballad measure.

KEATS, JOHN (1795-1821) —One of the chief examples, among the greater English poets, of sedulous and successful

study of prosody , in this contrasting remarkably with his contemporary, and in some sort analogue, Shelley   Began by much reading of Spenser and of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth - century poets, in following whose enjambed couplet he was also, to some extent, a disciple of Leigh Hunt   Exemplified the dangers as well as the beauties of this in *Endymion*, and corrected it by stanza-practice in *Isabella*, the *Eve of St Agnes*, and his great Odes, as well as by a study of Dryden which produced the stricter but more splendid couplet of *Lamia*   Strongly Miltonic, but with much originality also, in the blank verse of *Hyperion* , and a great master of the freer sonnet, which he had studied in the Elizabethans   Modified the ballad measure in *La Belle Dame sans Merci* with astonishing effect, and in the *Eve of St Mark* recovered (perhaps from Gower) a handling of the octosyllable which remained undeveloped till Mr William Morris took it up

KINGSLEY, CHARLES (1819-1875) —A poet very notable in proportion to the quantity of his work, for variety and freshness of metrical command in lyric   But chiefly so for the verse of *Andromeda*, which, aiming at accentual dactylic hexameter, converts itself into a five-foot anapæstic line with anacrusis and hypercatalexis, and in so doing entirely shakes off the ungainly and slovenly shamble of the *Evangeline* type

LANDOR, WALTER SAVAGE (1775-1864) —A great master of form in all metres, but, in his longer poems and more regular measures, a little formal in the less favourable sense   In his smaller lyrics (epigrammatic in the Greek rather than the modern use) hardly second to Ben Jonson, whom he resembles not a little   His phrase of singular majesty and grace.

LANGLAND, WILLIAM (fourteenth century).—The probable name of the pretty certainly single author of the remarkable alliterative poem called *The Vision of Piers Plowman*   Develops the alliterative metre itself in a masterly fashion through the successive versions of his poem, but

also exhibits most notably the tendency of the line to fall into definitely metrical shapes—decasyllable, Alexandrine, and fourteener,—with not infrequent anapæstic correspondences

LAYAMON (late twelfth and early thirteenth century) — Exhibits in the *Brut*, after a fashion hardly to be paralleled elsewhere, the passing of one metrical system into another May have intended to write unrhymed alliteratives, but constantly passes into complete rhymed octosyllabic couplet, and generally provides something between the two   A later version, made most probably, if not certainly, after his death, accentuates the transfer.

LEWIS,• MATTHEW GREGORY (1775 - 1818).—A very minor poet, and hardly a major man of letters in any other way than that of prosody   Here, however, in consequence partly of an early visit to Germany, he acquired love for, and command of, the anapæstic measures, which he taught to greater poets than himself from Scott down wards, and which had not a little to do with the progress of the Romantic Revival

LOCKER (latterly LOCKER-LAMPSON) FREDERICK (1821-1895) —An author of "verse of society" who brought out the serio - comic power of much variegated and indented metre with remarkable skill

LONGFELLOW, HENRY WADSWORTH (1807-1882) —An extremely competent American practitioner of almost every metre that he tried, except perhaps the unrhymed *terza rima*, which is difficult and may be impossible in English Established the popularity of the loose accentual hexameter in *Evangeline*, and did surprisingly well with unvaried trochaic dimeter in *Hiawatha*   His lyrical metres not of the first distinction, but always musical and craftsmanlike.

LYDGATE, JOHN (1370-1450 ?) —The most industrious and productive of the followers of Chaucer, writing indifferently rhyme-royal, "riding rhyme," and octosyllabic couplet, but especially the first and last, as well as *ballades* and probably other lyrical work.   Lydgate seems to have made an effort to accommodate the breaking-down pro-

nunciation of the time—especially as regarded final *e*'s—
to these measures ; but as a rule he had very little success
One of his varieties of decasyllable is elsewhere stigmatised
He is least abroad in the octosyllable, but not very effective
even there.

MACAULAY, THOMAS BABINGTON (1800-1859).—Best
known prosodically by his spirited and well beaten-out
ballad measure in the *Lays of Ancient Rome.*   Sometimes
as in " The Last Buccaneer," tried less commonplace
movements with strange success
    MAGINN, WILLIAM (1793-1842) —Deserves to be
mentioned with Barham as a chief initiator of the earlier
middle nineteenth century in the ringing and swinging
comic measures which have done soᶜ much to supple
English verse, and to accustom the general ear to its
possibilities.
    MARLOWE, CHRISTOPHER (1664-1693) —The greatest
master, among præ-Shakespearian writers, of the blank-
verse line for splendour and might, as Peele was for sweet-
ness and brilliant colour.   Seldom, though sometimes, got
beyond the "single-moulded" form ; but availed himself
to the very utmost of the majesty to which that form
rather specially lends itself   Very great also in couplet
(which he freely "enjambed") and in miscellaneous
measure when he tried it.
    ⸌ MILTON, JOHN (1608-1674) —The last of the four
chief masters of English prosody   Began by various
experiments in metre, both in and out of lyric stanza—
reaching, in the "Nativity" hymn, almost the maximum
of majesty in concerted measures.   In *L'Allegro, Il
Penseroso,* and the *Arcades* passed to a variety of the
octosyllabic couplet, which had been much practised by
Shakespeare and others, but developed its variety and
grace yet further, though he did not attempt the full
Spenserian or *Christabel* variation.   In *Comus* continued
this, partly, with lyrical extensions, but wrote the major part
in blank verse—not if reminiscent of the single-moulded

form, but largely studied off Shakespeare and Fletcher, and with his own peculiar turns already given to it.   In *Lycidas* employed irregularly rhymed paragraphs of mostly decasyllabic lines   Wrote some score of fine sonnets, adjusted more closely to the usual Italian models than those of most of his predecessors.   After an interval, produced, in *Paradise Lost*, the first long poem in blank verse, and the greatest non-dramatic example of the measure ever seen—admitting the fullest variation and substitution of foot and syllable, and constructing verse-paragraphs of almost stanzaic effect by varied pause and contrasted stoppage and overrunning   Repeated this, with perhaps some slight modifications, in *Paradise Regained* Finally, in *Samson Agonistes*, employed blank-verse dialogue with choric interludes rhymed elaborately—though in an afterthought note to *Paradise Lost* he had denounced rhyme —and arranged on metrical schemes sometimes unexampled in English

MOORE, THOMAS (1779-1852) —A very voluminous poet in the most various metres, and a competent master of all   But especially noticeable as a trained and practising musician, who wrote a very large proportion of his lyrics directly to music, and composed or adapted settings for many of them.   The double process has resulted in great variety and sweetness, but occasionally also in laxity which, from the prosodic point of view, is somewhat excessive.

MORRIS, WILLIAM (1834-1896).—One of the best and most variously gifted of recent prosodists.   In his early work, *The Defence of Guenevere*, achieved a great number of metres, on the most varied schemes, with surprising effect , in his longer productions, *Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise*, handled enjambed couplets, octosyllabic and decasyllabic, with an extraordinary compound of freedom and precision   In *Love is Enough* tried alliterative and irregular rhythm with unequal but sometimes beautiful results ; and in *Sigurd the Volsung* fingered the old four-teener into a sweeping narrative verse of splendid quality and no small range.

ORM —A monk of the twelfth to the thirteenth century, who composed a long versification of the Calendar Gospels in unrhymed, strictly syllabic, fifteen-syllabled verse, lending itself to regular division in eights and sevens.   A very important evidence as to the experimenting tendency of the time and to the strivings for a new English prosody.

O'SHAUGHNESSY, ARTHUR W E (1844-1881) —A lyrist of great originality, and with a fingering peculiar to himself, though most nearly resembling that of Edgar Poe

PEELE, GEORGE (1558?-1597?) —Remarkable for softening the early " decasyllabon " as Marlowe sublimed it

PERCY, THOMAS (1729-1811) —As an original verse-maker, of very small value, and as a meddler with older verse to patch and piece it, somewhat mischievous , but as the editor of the *Reliques*, to be hallowed and canonised for that his deed, in every history of English prosody and poetry

POE, EDGAR (1809-1849) —The greatest master of original prosodic effect that the United States have produced, and an instinctively and generally right (though, in detail, hasty, ill-informed, and crude) essayist on points of prosodic doctrine   Produced little, and that little not always equal , but at his best an unsurpassable master of music in verse and phrase

POPE, ALEXANDER (1688-1744) —Practically devoted himself to one metre, and one form of it—the stopped heroic couplet,—subjected as much as possible to a rigid absence of licence , dropping (though he sometimes used them) the triplets and Alexandrines, which even Dryden had admitted , adhering to an almost mathematically centrical pause , employing, by preference, short, sharp rhymes with little echo in them , and but very rarely, though with at least one odd exception, allowing even the possibility of a trisyllabic foot.   An extraordinary artist on this practically single string, but gave himself few chances on others.

PRAED, WINTHROP •MACKWORTH (1802 1839) —An

early nineteenth-century Prior.   Not incapable of serious
verse, and hardly surpassed in laughter.   His greatest
triumph, the adaptation of the three-foot anapæst, alternately
hypercatalectic and acatalectic or exact, which had been
a ballad-burlesque metre as early as Gay, had been partly
ensouled by Byron in one piece, but was made his own by
Praed, and handed down by him to Mr Swinburne to be
yet further sublimated

PRIOR, MATTHEW (1664-1721) —Of special prosodic
importance for his exercises in anapæstic metres and in
octosyllabic couplet, both of which forms he practically
established in the security of popular favour, when the
stopped heroic couplet was threatening monopoly   His
phrase equally suitable to the *vers de société* of which he
was our first great master

ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER (*fl c* 1280) —*Nomen clarum*
in prosody, as being apparently the first copious and
individual producer of the great fourteener metre, which,
with the octosyllabic couplet, is the source, or at least the
oldest, of all modern English forms.

ROSSETTI, CHRISTINA GEORGINA (1830-1894) and DANTE
GABRIEL (1828-1882) —A brother and sister who rank
extraordinarily high in our flock   Of mainly Italian blood,
though thoroughly Anglicised, and indeed partly English
by blood itself, they produced the greatest English sonnets
on the commoner Italian model, and displayed almost
infinite capacity in other metres   Miss Rossetti had the
greater tendency to metrical experiment, and perhaps the
more strictly lyrical gift of the song kind , her brother,
the severer command of sculpturesque but richly coloured
form in poetry

SACKVILLE, THOMAS (1536-1608) —One of the last and
best practitioners of the old rhyme-royal of Chaucer, and
one of the first experimenters in dramatic blank verse

SANDYS, GEORGE (1578-1644).—Has traditional place
after Fairfax and with Waller (Sir John Beaumont, who
ought to rank perhaps before these, being generally

omitted) as a practitioner of stopped heroic couplet   Also used *In Memoriam* quatrain.

SAYERS, FRANK (1763-1817) —An apostle, both in practice and preaching, of the unrhymed verse—noteworthy at the close of the eighteenth century—which gives him his place in the story

SCOTT, SIR WALTER (1771-1832) —The facts of his prosodic influence and performance hardly deniable, but its nature and value often strangely misrepresented   Was probably influenced by Lewis in adopting (from the German) anapæstic measures, and certainly and most avowedly influenced by Coleridge (whose *Christabel* he heard read or recited long before publication) in adopting equivalenced octosyllabic couplet and ballad metres in narrative verse But probably derived as much from the old ballads and romances themselves, which he knew as no one else then did, and as few have known them since   Applied the method largely in his verse-romances, but was also a master of varied forms of lyric, no mean proficient in the Spenserian and in fragments, at least, of blank verse

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM (1564-1616) —The *catholicos* or universal master, as of English poetry so of English prosody   In the blank verse of his plays, and in the songs interspersed in them, as well as in his immature narrative poems and more mature sonnets, every principle of English versification can be found exemplified, less deliberately "machined," it may be, than in Milton or Tennyson, but in absolutely genuine and often not earlier-found form

 SHELLEY, PERCY BYSSHE (1792-1822) —The great modern example of prosodic inspiration, as Keats, Tennyson, and Mr Swinburne are of prosodic study   Shelley's early verse is as unimportant in this way as in others, but from *Queen Mab* to some extent, from *Alastor* unquestionably, onwards, he displayed totally different quality, and every metre that he touched (even if possibly suggested to some extent by others) bears the marks of his own personality.

SHENSTONE, WILLIAM (1714-1763) —Not quite unimportant as poet, in breaking away from the couplet, but of much more weight for the few prosodic remarks in his *Essays*, in which he directly pleads for trisyllabic (as he awkwardly calls them "dactylic") feet, for long-echoing rhymes, and for other things adverse to the "mechanic tune by heart" of the popular prosody

SIDNEY, SIR PHILIP (1554-1586) —A great experimenter in Elizabethan classical forms, but much more happy·as an accomplished and very influential master of the sonnet, and a lyric poet of great sweetness and variety

SOUTHEY, ROBERT (1774-1843) —A very deft and learned practitioner of many kinds of verse, his tendency to experiment leading him into rhymelessness (*Thalaba*) and hexameters (*The Vision of Judgment*), but quite sound on general principles, and the first of his school and time to champion the use of trisyllabic feet in principle, and to appeal to old practice in their favour

SPENSER, EDMUND (1552 ?-1599) —The second founder of English prosody in his whole work, the restorer of regular form not destitute of music, the preserver of equivalence in octosyllabic couplet, and the inventor of the great Spenserian stanza, the greatest in every sense of all assemblages of lines, possessing individual beauty and capable of indefinite repetition

SURREY, EARL OF, the courtesy title of HENRY HOWARD (1517-1547) —Our second English sonneteer, our second author of reformed literary lyric after the fifteenth-century break-down, and our first clearly intentional writer of blank verse

SWINBURNE, ALGERNON CHARLES (1837-1909) —Of all English poets the one who has applied the widest scholarship and study, assisted by great original prosodic gift, to the varying and accomplishing of English metre. Impeccable in all kinds, in lyric nearly supreme. To some extent early, and, still more, later, experimented in very long lines, never unharmonious, but sometimes rather compounds than genuine integers. Achieved many

triumphs with special metres, especially by the shortening of the last line of the Praed-stanza into the form of "Dolores," which greatly raises its passion and power

TENNYSON, ALFRED (1809-1892)—A poet who very nearly, if not quite, deserves the position accorded here to Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton   Coming sufficiently late after the great Romantic poets of the earlier school to generalise their results, he started with an apparent freedom (perfectly orderly, in fact) which puzzled even Coleridge   Very soon, too, he produced a practically new form of blank verse, in which the qualities of the Miltonic and Shakespearian kinds were blended, and a fresh metrical touch given   All poets since—sometimes while denying or belittling him—have felt his prosodic influence , and it is still, even after Mr Swinburne's fifty years of extended practice of it, the pattern of modern English prosody

THOMSON, JAMES (1700-1748) — The first really important practitioner of blank verse after Milton, and a real, though rather *mannerised*, master of it   Displayed an equally real, and more surprising, though much more unequal, command of the Spenserian in *The Castle of Indolence*

TUSSER, THOMAS (1524 ?-1580) —A very minor poet —in fact, little more than a doggerelist , but important because, at the very time when men like Gascoigne were doubting whether English had any foot but the iambic, he produced lolloping but perfectly metrical continuous anapæsts, and mixed measures of various kinds.

WALLER, EDMUND (1606 - 1687) —A good mixed prosodist of the Caroline period, whose chief traditional importance is in connection with the popularising of the stopped couplet   His actual precedence in this is rather doubtful ; but his influence was early acknowledged, and therefore is an indisputable fact   He was also early as a literary user of anapæstic measures, and tried various experiments.

WATTS, ISAAC (1674-1741) —By no means unnoteworthy as a prosodist   Followed Milton in blank verse, early popularised triple-time measures by his religious pieces, evidently felt the monotony of the couplet, and even attempted English Sapphics

WHITMAN, WALT[ER] (1819-1892) —An American poet who has pushed farther than any one before him, and with more success than any one after him, the substitution, for regular metre, of irregular rhythmed prose, arranged in versicles something like those of the English Bible, but with a much wider range of length and rhythm, the latter going from sheer prose cadence into definite verse

WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM (1770-1850) —Less important as a prosodist than as a poet , but prosodically remarkable both for his blank verse, for his sonnets, and for the " Pindaric " of his greatest Ode.

WYATT, SIR THOMAS (1503 ? -1542) —Our first English sonneteer and our first reformer, into regular literary verse, of lyric after the fifteenth-century disorder   An experimenter with *terza*, and in other ways prosodically eminent.

CHAPTER III

(It has seemed desirable to give some account (to an
extent which would in most cases be disproportionate for
the Glossary) of the ascertained, probable, of supposed
origin of the principal lines and line-combinations in
English poetry   The arrangement is *logical rather than
alphabetical.   Slight repetition, on some points, of matter
previously given is unavoidable.)

A. Lines

I. Alliterative — Enough has probably been said
above of the old alliterative line and its generic character,
while the later variations, which came upon it after its
revival, have also been noticed and exemplified   Its origin
is quite unknown, but the presence of closely allied forms,
in the different Scandinavian and Teutonic languages,
assures, beyond doubt, a natural rise from some speech-
rhythm or tune-rhythm proper to the race and tongue   It
is also probable that the remarkable difference of lengths
—short, normal, and extended—which is observable in
O E poetry is of the highest antiquity.   It has at any
rate persevered to the present day in the metrical successors
of this line, and there is probably no other poetry which
has — at a majority of its periods, if not throughout —
indulged in such variety of line-length as English.   Nor,
perhaps, is there any which contains, even in its oldest
and roughest forms, a metrical or quasi-metrical arrange-
ment more close to ‹ the naturally increased, but not

denaturalised, emphasis of impassioned utterance, more thoroughly born from the primeval oak and rock.

II " SHORT " LINES —Despite the tendency to variation of lines above noted, A S poetry did not favour *very* short ones , and its faithful disciple and champion, Guest, accordingly condemns them in modern English poetry This is quite wrong   In the " bobs " and other examples in Middle English we find the line shortened almost, if not actually, to the monosyllable, and this liberty has persisted through all the best periods of English verse since, though frequently frowned upon by pedantry.   Its *origin is, beyond all reasonable doubt, to be traced to* French and Provençal influence, especially to that of the short refrain ; but it is so congenial to the general tendency noted above that very little suggestion must have been needed.   It must, however, be said that very short lines, in combination with long ones, almost necessitate rhyme to punctuate and illumine the divisions of symphonic effect ; and, consequently, it was not till rhyme came in that they could be safely and successfully used But when this was mastered there was no further difficulty. In all the best periods of English lyric writing—in that of *Alison* and its fellows, in the carols of the fifteenth century, in late Elizabethan and Caroline lyric, and in nineteenth-century poetry—the admixture of very short lines has been a main secret of lyrical success , and in most cases it has probably been hardly at all a matter of deliberate imitation, but due to an instinctive sense of the beauty and convenience of the adjustment.

III OCTOSYLLABLE —The historical origin of the octosyllabic (or, as the accentual people call it, the four-beat or four-stress line) is one of the most typical in the whole range of prosody, though the lesson of the type may be differently interpreted   Taking it altogether, there is perhaps no metre in which so large a body of modern, including mediæval, poetry has been composed.   But, although it is simply dimeter iambic, acatalectic or catalectic as the case may be, it is quite vain to try to

discover frequent and continuous patterns of origin for it
in strictly classical prosody.[1]   Odd lines, rarely exact, in
choric odes prove nothing, and the really tempting

<div align="center">Ἄμμων Ὀλύμπου δέσποτα</div>

of Pindar is an uncompleted fragment which might have
gone off into any varieties of Pindaric   There are a few
fragments of Alcman—

<div align="center">Ὥρας δ' ἔσηκε τρεῖς, θέρος</div>

and of the genuine Anacreon—

<div align="center">Μηδ' ὥστε κῦμα πόντιον,</div>

in the metre, while the spurious verse of the " Anacreontea,"
a catalectic form with trisyllabic equivalence, seems to
have been actually practised by the real poet   *Alternately*
used, it is, of course, frequent in the epodes of Horace, in
Martial, etc   But the fact remains that, as has been said, it
is not a classical metre to any but a very small extent, though
those who attach no value to anything but the " beats "
may find it in bulk in the *anapæstic* dimeter of Greek and
Latin choruses   It is in the Latin hymns—that is to say,
in Latin after it had undergone a distinct foreign admixture
—that the metre first appears firmly and distinctly estab-
lished   In the fourth century, St Ambrose without rhyme,
and Hilary with it, employ the iambic dimeter, and it soon
becomes almost the staple, though Prudentius, contemporary
with both of them and more of a regular poet, while he
does use it, seems to prefer other metres   By the time,
however, when the modern prosodies began to take form,
it was thoroughly well settled , and every Christian nation
in Europe knew examples of it by heart

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[1] The longest passage that my memory (assisted in this case by the
kindness of my friend and colleague Professor Hardie) supplies is in
Aristophanes, *Eq* 911-940   And it is not insignificant that this not only
becomes (and seems actually to be started by) a burlesque repetition—

<div align="center">Α ἐμοῦ μὲν οὖν</div>
<div align="center">Κ ἐμοῦ μὲν οὖν,</div>

but can only be made out by constantly breaking words, as in

<div align="center">εἰς ἣν ἀναλῶν οὐκ ἐφέ-
ξεις οὐδὲ ναυπηγούμενος.</div>

It still, however, remains a problem exactly why this particular metre should, as a matter of direct literary imitation, have commended itself so widely to the northern nations   They had nearly or quite as many examples in the same class of the *trochaic* dimeter

Gaude, plaude, Magdalena

and they paid no attention to this, though their southern neighbours did   They had, from the time of Pope Damasus [1] downwards, and in almost all the hymn-writers, mixed dactylic metres to choose from, but for a staple they went to this   It seems impossible that there should not have been some additional and natural reasons for the adoption—reasons which, if they had not actually brought it about without any literary patterns at all, directed poets to those patterns irresistibly   Nor, as it seems to the present writer, is it at all difficult to discover, as far at least as English is concerned, what these reasons were

The discovery might be made " out of one's own head ", but here as elsewhere Layamon is a most important assistant and safeguard   A mere glance at any edition of alliterative verse, printed in half lines, will show that it has a rough resemblance on the page to octosyllabics, though the outline is more irregular   A moderately careful study of Layamon shows, as has been indicated, that, in writing this verse with new influences at work upon him, he substitutes octosyllabic couplet for it constantly   And the history in the same way shows that this occasional substitution became a habitual one with others.   Not that there is any mystical virtue in four feet, despite their frequency in the actual creation   but that, as an equivalent of the old half line, the choice lies practically between three and four.   Now a three-foot line, though actually tried as in

[1] Stirpe decens, elegans specie,
Sed magis actibus atque fide,
Terrea prospera nil reputans
Jussa Dei sibi corde ligans

This, which is still fourth century, is important as showing *couplet* rhyme. Hilary had rhymed in *fours*

the *Bestiary* and in parts of *Horn*, is, as a general norm, too short, is ineffective and jingly, brings the rhyme too quick and hampers the exhibition of the sense by a too staccato and piecemeal presentment   The abundant adoption of the octosyllable in French no doubt assisted the spread in English   But it is not unimportant to observe that English translators and adapters of French octosyllabic poems by no means always preserve the metre, and that English octosyllables often represent French poems which are differently metred in the original

IV DECASYLLABLE —A connected literary origin for this great line—the ancient staple of French poetry, the modern staple of English, and (in still greater modernity) of German to some extent, as well as (with the extension of one syllable necessitated by the prevailing rhythm of the language) of Italian throughout its history—has always been found extraordinarily difficult to assign   That some have even been driven to the line which furnishes the opening couplet of the Alcaic

> Quam si clientum longa negotia,

or

> Vides ut alta stet nive candidum,

an invariably *hen*decasyllabic line of the most opposite rhythm, constitution, and division, will show the straits which must have oppressed them   The fact is that there is nothing, either in Greek or Latin prosody, in the least resembling it or suggestive of it   To connect it with these prosodies at all reasonably, it would be necessary to content ourselves with the supposition, not illogical or impossible, but not very explanatory, that somebody found the iambic dimeter too short, and the iambic trimeter too long, and split the difference

In another way, and abandoning the attempt to find parents or sponsors in antiquity for this remarkable foundling, a not wholly dissimilar conjecture becomes really illuminative—that the line of ten syllables (or eleven with " weak ending ") proved itself the most useful in the

modern languages.   As a matter of fact it appears in the very earliest French poem we possess—the tenth- or perhaps even ninth-century *Hymn of St Eulalia*

Bel auret corps, bellezour anima,

and in the (at youngest) tenth-century Provençal *Boethius*

No credet Deu lo nostre creator

If it still seem pusillanimous to be content with such an explanation, one can share one's pusillanimity with Dante, who contents himself with saying that the line of eleven syllables "seems the stateliest and most excellent, as well by reason of the length of time it occupies as of the extent of subject, construction and language of which it is capable "   And in English, with which we are specially, if not indeed wholly, concerned, history brings us the reinforcement of showing that the decasyllable literally forced itself, in practice, upon the English poet.

This all-important fact has been constantly obscured by the habit of saying that Chaucer " invented " the heroic couplet in English—that he, at any rate, borrowed it first from the French   Whether he did so as a personal fact we cannot say, for he is not here to tell us   That he need not have done so there is ample and irrefragable evidence In the process of providing substitutes for the old un-metrical line, it is not only obvious that the decasyllable— which, from a period certainly anterior to the rise of Middle English, had been the staple metre, in long assonanced *tirades* or batches, of the French *Chansons de geste*—must have suggested itself   It is still more certain that it did.   It is found in an unpolished and haphazard condition, but unmistakable, in the *Orison of our Lady* (early thirteenth century) , it occurs in *Genesis and Exodus*, varying the octosyllable itself, in the middle of that age , it is scattered about the Romances, in the same company, at what must have been early fourteenth century at latest , it occurs constantly in Hampole's *Prick of Conscience* at the middle of this century , and there are

solid blocks of it in the Vernon MS, which was written (*i e* copied from earlier work), at latest, before Chaucer is likely to have started the *Legend of Good Women* or the *Canterbury Tales*   That his practice settled and established it — though for long the octosyllable still outbid it in couplet, and it was written chiefly in the stanza form of "rhyme-royal" — is true   But by degrees the qualities which *Dante had alleged made it prevail, and prepared it* as *the* line-length for blank verse as well as for the heroic couplet, and for the bulk of narrative stanza-writing   No doubt Chaucer was assisted by the practice of Machault and other French poets   But there should be still less doubt that, without that practice, he might, and probably would, have taken it up   For the first real master of versification— whether he were Chaucer, or (in unhappy default of him) somebody else, who must have turned up sooner or later— could not but have seen, for his own language, what Dante saw for his

V ALEXANDRINE —The Alexandrine or verse of twelve syllables, iambically divided, does not resemble its relation, the octosyllable, in having a doubtful classical ancestry, or its other relation, the decasyllable, in having none   It is, from a certain point of view, the exact representative of the great iambic trimeter which was the staple metre of Greek tragedy, and was largely used in Greek and Roman verse.   The identity of the two was recognised in English as early as the *Mirror for Magistrates*, and indeed could escape no one who had the knowledge and used it in the most obvious way

At the same time it is necessary frankly to say that this resemblance—at least, as giving the key to origin—is, in all probability, wholly delusive   There are twelve syllables in each line, and there are iambics in both   But to any one who has acquired—as it is the purpose of this book to help its readers to acquire or develop — a "prosodic" sense, like the much-talked-of historic sense, it will seem to be a matter of no small weight, that while the cæsura (central pause) of the ancient trimeter is

penthemimeral (at the fifth syllable), or hepthemimeral (at the seventh), that of the modern "Alexandrine" is, save by rare, and not often justified, license, invariably at the sixth or middle—a thing which actually alters the whole rhythmical constitution and effect of the line [1] Nor, is the *name* to be neglected Despite the strenuous effort of modern times to upset traditional notions, it remains a not seriously disputed fact that the name "Alexandrine" comes from the French *Roman d'Alexandre*, not earlier than the late twelfth century, and itself following upon at least one *decasyllabic* Alexandreid The metre, however, suited French, and, as it had done on this particular subject, ousted the decasyllable in the *Chansons de geste* generally , while, with some intervals and revolts, it has remained the " dress-clothes " of French poetry ever since, and even imposed itself as such upon German for a considerable time.

In English, however, though, by accident and in special and partial use, it has occupied a remarkable place, it has never been anything like a staple One of the most singular statements in Guest's *English Rhythms* is that the " verse of six accents " (as he calls it) was " formerly the one most commonly used in our language " The present writer is entirely unable to identify this " formerly " . and the examples which Guest produces, of single and occasional occurrence in O E and early M E , seem to him for the most part to have nothing to do with the form But it was inevitable that on the one hand the large use of the metre in French, and on the other its nearness as a metrical adjustment to the old long line or stave, should make it appear sometimes The six-syllable lines of the *Bestiary* and *Horn* are attempts to reproduce it in halves, - and Robert of Brunne reproduces it as a whole [2] It appears not seldom in the great metrical miscellany of the Vernon MS , and many of Langland's accentual-alliterative

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[1] It may be added that while the ancient trimeter is very largely patient of substitution, the French Alexandrine positively refuses any, and the English is, for an English line, distinctly intolerant of it

[2] And somewhat of that tree, they bone until his hands

lines reduce themselves to, or close to it, while it very often makes a fugitive and unkempt appearance in fifteenth-century doggerel   Not a few of the poems of the *Mirror for Magistrates* are composed in it, and as an alternative to the fourteener (this was possibly what Guest was thinking of) it figures in the "poulter's measure" of the early and middle sixteenth century   Sidney used it for the sonnet   But it was not till Drayton's *Polyolbion* that it obtained the position of continuous metre for a long poem   and˙ this has never been repeated since, except in Browning's *Fifine at the Fair*

So, the most important appearances by far of the Alexandrine in English are *not* continuous , but as employed to vary and complete other lines   There are two of these in especial   the first among the greatest metrical devices in English, the other (though variously judged and not very widely employed) a great improvement   The first is the addition, to an eight-line arrangement in decasyllables, of a ninth in Alexandrine which constitutes the Spenserian stanza and will be spoken of below   The other is the employment of the Alexandrine as a variation of decasyllable in couplet, in triplet and singly, which is, according to some, including the present writer, visible in the " riding-rhyme " of Chaucer , which is often present in the blank verse of Shakespeare , not absent from that of Milton in his earlier attempts , employed in decasyllabic couplet by Cowley, and (with far greater success) by Dryden , gradually abandoned and unfavourably spoken of by Pope , but revived with magnificent effect by Keats in *Lamia*

VI   FOURTEENER —On this, as indeed on most of these heads, it will be well to compare the continuous survey of scanned examples and the remarks there   This line (or its practical equivalent under the final *e* system, the *fif*teener) is probably the oldest attempt to get a single metrical equivalent for the old divided stave   Its own equivalents exist, of course, both in Greek and Latin, but it is rather doubtful whether these had much or anything to do with its genesis.   A more probable source, if any source of the

kind is wanted, has been suggested in the peculiar Latin *thir*teener so popular in the Middle Ages, and best known by the lines attributed to Mapes—

> Meum est propositum in taberna mori.

With a "catch" syllable at each half[1] you get the full accentual iambic *fif*teener, and the *four*teener follows.

Perhaps, though it is difficult to recognise the fourteener-rhythm attributed by Guest and others to Cædmon and later A S writers, it is not necessary to look for any foreign sources as other than auxiliary to the development of the metre in English So soon as a definite iambic mould, with or without trochaic and anapæstic substitution, began to be impressed on the language, the amount of stuff usual in a full line would naturally fall into fourteener shape It did so, we know, as early as the *Moral Ode* at least, and barely a century later, it showed its popularity by the abundant use of Robert of Gloucester and the *Saints' Lives* writers Nor, although the inevitable and fortunate break-up into ballad eight-and-six encroached on its rights to a large extent, and the alliterative revival still more, did it lose its attraction, as *Gamelyn* and other things show, till it got half drowned in the doggerel welter of the fifteenth century From this the earlier Elizabethans fished it out, cleaned and mended it for practice both independently and as part of the "poulter's measure," while the finest example existing was given by Chapman's *Iliad* in the early seventeenth century More recently, except in the *Sigurd* variety, it has been seldom used for long poems, but has served as the vehicle of many of the finest short pieces in the poetry of the nineteenth century

VII DOGGEREL —In the sense (see Glossary) in which this ambiguous word applies to *line*, it is very important to acquire some notion of its meaning, but rather difficult to put that notion except very hypothetically It is, in this use, conveniently applied to an enormous mass of

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[1] As thus
  [*Et*] me|um est | propo|situm | [*hac*] in | taber|na mori.

verse—sometimes hardly deserving that name, but princi-
pally produced in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries
—which refuses, except occasionally, to adjust itself to any
standard, even liberally equivalenced, of iambic octosyllable,
decasyllable, Alexandrine, and fourteener, or of the trochaic
and anapæstic metres corresponding to some of these,
though it comes nearest to the anapæstic division   The
pure accentualist may dismiss it as lines of so many
irregular beats, and trouble himself no farther   But that,
on the principles of this book, will not do   An exceedingly
interesting parallel between it (as well as one of its regular-
ised forms, the anapæstic dimeter) and the Spanish long
line, or "Arte Mayor," has been drawn by Professor Ker
(See Bibliography)   But, without either taking or opposing
his view, there is no doubt of the existence of this *mare
magnum* of imperfect versification   It seems to have been
fed by various streams   In the first place, as we see from
the *Gamelyn* metre, and from some nursery songs (which,
though they cannot be older than formed Middle English,
may be nearly as old), like "The Queen was in the Parlour,"
the fourteener had a tendency to break itself into roughly
balanced halves of sometimes different rhythm   The Alex-
andrine, never quite at home in English, would naturally
bulge and straddle in the same way   On the regular and
continuous anapæstic swing nobody had yet hit for long,
though it probably arose in part from this very chaos
But perhaps the most abundant source of all was the
attempt to write Chaucerian decasyllables with a con-
stantly altering pronunciation, and the break-down in it
Examples of various forms of doggerel, with their corre-
sponding metres, are given below [1]

[1] (*a*) From Heywood —
(1) Octosyllabic principally

> And I to every soul again
> Did give a beck them to retain,
> And axèd them this question than,
> If that the soul of such a woman
> Did late among them there appear ?
>   (*Four P's*)

But in close proximity such lines as

VIII. "Long" Lines—Beyond the fourteener or fifteener English verse has, until quite modern times, rarely gone   There are *six*teeners to be found in fourteenth-century verse, in the disorderly welter of the fifteenth, and (no doubt deliberately used) in the experiments of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, but neither they, nor any longer still, commended themselves much to any English poet before Mr Swinburne.   His experiments are famous, and some examples of them are given elsewhere   Their spirit and sweep has made not a few

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But Lord ! how low the Souls made curtesy,

and

'Christ, help,' quoth a soul that lay for his fees,

make their appearance

(2) Hawesian or Barclayan decasyllables staggering into Alexandrine or anapæstic doggerel

> How can he have pain by imagination,
> That lacketh all kinds of consideration ?
> And in all senses is so insufficient
> That nought can he think in ought that may be meant
> By any means to devise any self thing,
> Nor devise in thing past, present, or coming ?
>   (*Wit and Folly*)

(For other passages from Heywood see Scanned Conspectus, § XVIII)

(*b*) Longer examples —
(1) With Alexandrine norm

> Therefore see that all shine as bright as Saint George,
> Or as doth a key newly come from the smith's forge
>   (*Ralph Roister Doister*)

(2) With fourteener ditto

D I know not what a devil thou meanest, thou bringest me mere in doubt
H Knowest not on what tom tailor s man sits broaching through a clout ?
                              (*Gammer Gurton s Needle*)

It is curious how closely this unreverend metre sometimes comes to the *hero'c model of Sigurd*

(3) With decasyllabic ditto

> Housed to say that as servants are obedient,
> To their bodily masters being in subjection,
> Even so evil men that are not content
> Are subject and slave to their lust and affection,

where, once more, the norm may be shifted to the anapæst

readers look on them with favour, but it may be questioned whether any lines beyond seven feet—and whether even six- and seven-foot lines when trisyllabic feet are allowed —do not tend to break themselves up in English   In Mr Swinburne's own case certainly, and perhaps in some others, the seven-foot anapæstic line of Aristophanes gave the suggestion, while the abundant practice in so-called English hexameters may also have had not a little to do with it.

B. Stanzas, etc

I (BALLAD VERSE)—A good deal has been said in cidentally about this at several points in the preceding text, but summary, and a little repetition, will not be out of place here   There has been an idea with some that it is a shortened form of the Romance-six (see next article) or *rime couée*, but this does not seem to the present writer nearly so probable as the supposition of a break-up of the certainly earlier fourteener couplet, which gives it at once [1] It is, however, not improbable that the crystallising of this was assisted by the hesitation, also noticed in text, between octosyllabic and hexasyllabic couplet   The indecision and vacillation, noticeable in such a piece as *Horn*, between the four- and three-foot line, would easily settle to alternation more or less regular, and then, with the assistance of the broken fourteener, into quite regular use   We do not, however, find decided examples much before "Judas" and the *Gospel of Nicodemus* in the late thirteenth century ; it is not common in the early mysteries, though there are approaches to it, and it seems first to have secured the popular ear in the much-discussed compositions which give it its name, and which, in English, are very doubtfully to be

[1] ∪ − ∪ − ∪ − ∪ − ‖ ∪ − ∪ − ∪ −
∪ − ∪ − ∪ − ∪ − ‖ ∪ − ∪ − ∪ −
= ∪ − ∪ − ∪ − ∪ −
∪ − ∪ − ∪ −
∪ − ∪ − ∪ − ∪ −
∪ − ∪ − ∪ −

(Substitution of individual feet in each case immaterial)

traced before the late fourteenth century   These, however, "estated" it once for all, though for a long time it was treated with the usual mediæval freedom—wisely restored by Coleridge in the *Ancient Mariner*—and the exact number of four lines, 8, 6, 8, 6, was not adhered to   The further fixed variations, familiar from Psalm- and Hymn-books, of " L M " (long measure) or octosyllabic quatrain, "C M " (common measure), the actual 8 and 6, and "S M " (short measure) 6, 6, 8, 6, date only from Elizabethan times, the last being a breaking-up of the then favourite "poulter's measure " or alternate Alexandrine and fourteener

II. ROMANCE-SIX or RIME COUÉE —As in the case of the ballad-four, much has been said about this earlier   In considering its origin it is particularly desirable to distinguish between the possible source of the principle and the probable derivation of the actual form   The term *couée* (*caudatus*), which, as has been pointed out, does not apply very obviously or appropriately to our actual romance-stanza, appears to refer originally to the peculiar jingly infusion of rhyme into Latin hexameters which has been traced back at least to the twelfth century, and the most famous example of which is the original of "Jerusalem the Golden," the *De Contemptu Mundi* of Bernard of Morlaix—

> Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus—
> Ecce minaciter imminet arbiter ille supremus,

where the rhyme " in the tail " appears clearly enough   It is also not inappropriate to the form in which Robert of Brunne writes his verse of the kind, as in Guest's example

When ye have the prize of your enemies, none shall ye save
Smite with sword in hand, all Northumberland with right shall ye have

Sometimes, however, he also batches the two first divisions

> For Edward's good deed ⎱ a wicked bounty
> The Balliol did him meed ⎰

But it came generally to be written in short lines straight on after the form now familiar   How or why it became so favourite a measure for romance is not, I believe, known

Direct French influence could certainly have had little to do here, for though the six-line measure appears in Marot (early sixteenth century), it is not common earlier, and I am not even aware of any perfect example [1] of it, in the abundant variety of French and Provençal lyric during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while it is quite unknown to the longer French romances   But it is nearly as easy to remember——or to extemporise in default of memory——as the couplet itself   And it looks as if it were less monotonous, though——as those who drew down on it the lash of *Sir Thopas*, and *Sir Thopas* itself, show——nothing can be more monotonous in actuality   Its extensions and variations, and its migration from long narrative to short lyrical use, have been noticed already   *These* may have been to some extent influenced by the great popularity of Marot's *Psalms*, though the metre had long been naturalised

III OCTOSYLLABIC and DECASYLLABIC COUPLET.—Of the two great couplet metres in English, the octosyllabic requires little notice, because it is almost indissolubly connected with the octosyllabic *line*   As soon as rhyme appears, the old iambic dimeter, four-accent line, or whatever you like to call it, *must* fall into this shape, and does   There remains indeed the problem why we have no period, in French, of octosyllabic *tirade* or batch-writing as we have (see immediately below) of decasyllabic [2]   But it is certain that the octosyllabic couplet established itself very early in French, and that at the important nick of time, when English

[1] The nearest is probably No 28 in Bartsch, *Romanzen und Pastourellen*, "Volez vos que je vos chante," with its famous verse about the nightingale and the mermaid   But there is a perpetual tendency to cut the eights to sevens and the sixes to fives, as thus

> Li rosignox est mon pere
> Qui chante sur la ramee
> El plus haut boscage
> La seraine ele est ma mere
> Qui chante en la mer salee
> El plus haut rivage

[2] There are examples, as in the *Vie de Saint Léger* and in Alberic of Besançon's fragmentary poem on Alexander, but few of them, and the couplet soon conquers

prosody was being formed late in the twelfth century, this couplet came to Layamon and others as a great influence in determining the shape which alteration of the old long line or halved stave should take in their hands

Decasyllabic couplet, on the other hand, has a much more tardy and uncertain history, though, again, much that has to be said about it has been said in reference to the single line   As soon as that line makes its appearance, in the "Saint Eulalia" hymn, it does indeed make its appearance in couplet, rhymed or assonanced [1]   But the attraction of the longer batches in identical rhyme or assonance seems, however surprisingly,[2] to get the better, and this is the form that it takes in the Provençal *Boethius* and the French *Saint Alexis*   In fact, as has been hinted above, our own scattered decasyllabic couplet rather precedes the French, though Guillaume de Machault has the credit, rightly or wrongly, of teaching it to Chaucer After Chaucer, at any rate, there needed nobody to teach it to Englishmen, although it underwent various vicissitudes, which are duly traced elsewhere

IV   QUATRAIN —At a very early period, indeed as soon as they appear, Latin accentual rhythms have a tendency to batch themselves in four, as had, earlier still, Greek and Latin stanzas, Sapphic, Alcaic, and what not   The development of alternate rhyme in the octosyllabic quatrain or (*v sup*) ballad metre was certain to lead to a similar arrangement of *deca*syllables, and when rhyme‑royal became popular the first four lines were so arranged, and might easily be broken off for separate use, as there is little doubt that the final couplet was   "Fours" of various arrangement are also abundant in lyric and in drama from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century   But the greatest

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[1]   Buona pulcella fut Eulalia,   } *rhyme*
  Bel auret corps, bellezour anima. }

  Voldrent la veintre li deo inimi   } *assonance*
  Voldrent la faire diaule servir, }

[2]   Not to the present writer, nor, he thinks, to any one who is really familiar with the *Chansons de geste*

impulse was probably given to the alternate decasyllabic
form by its adoption for the bulk of the English sonnet;
and from this to separate use, which became common in
the later Elizabethan poetry, there is but a very short step
The metre has always been a popular one since, and, in
the hands of Dryden and Gray especially, is very effective
But a certain grave monotony about it has constantly
invited modifications, of which the greatest and most
successful, without altering the line-length, are those of
FitzGerald in *Omar Khayyám*[1] and Mr Swinburne in
Laus Veneris,[2] with altered line-lengths, those of Tennyson
in "The Poet,"[3] "The Palace of Art," and "A Dream
of Fair Women" It was also tried in the seventeenth
century as what may be called by anticipation "long
In Memoriam measure"—that is to say, with the rhymes
arranged *abba*

V. In Memoriam Metre itself may have been suggested
quite casually in the endless rhyme-welter of mediæval
experiment.   For instance, it occurs in lines 3 to 6 of
Chaucer's nine-line stanza[4] in the *Complaint of Mars,* and

> [1] A book of verses underneath the bough,
>   A jug of wine, a loaf of bread—and thou
>   Beside me singing in the wilderness—
>   Oh ! wilderness were Paradise enow !

> [2] I seal myself upon thee with my might,
>   Abiding always out of all men s sight,
>   Until God loosen over sea and land
>   The thunder of the trumpets of the night—

The only difference of these is that FitzGerald, following, I believe, his
Persian original, left the third lines quite blank, while Mr Swinburne
rhymed these in adjacent stanzas

[3] For examples see above, Book II Chap VI pp 209, 210

> [4] To whom shal I then pleyne of my distresse ?
>   Who may me helpe ?   Who may my harm redresse ?
>   *Shall I compleyne unto my lady fre ?*
>   *Nay, certes ! for she hath such hevynesse,*
>   *For fere, and eek for wo, that, as I gesse,*
>   *In litil tyme it wol her bane be*
>   But were she sauf, it were no fors of me !
>   Alas ! that ever lovers mote endure,
>   For love, | so ma|ny a pe|rilous a|venture !
>   (ll 191-199)

the last eight of his ten-line in the *Complaint to his Lady*,[1] with decasyllabic lines, of course   It occurs also, with six-syllable lines, in the last halves of the octaves of No. XIX of the *York Plays* [2] Sidney has it as a "sport" or chance But the first person to use it regularly and with octo-syllables was Ben Jonson,[3] who was followed by Lord Herbert of Cherbury and George Sandys   Yet it was not widely taken up, though few measures could better have suited the "metaphysical" poets , and after that genera-tion it remained unused till Tennyson, and by unwitting coincidence Rossetti, hit upon it just before the middle of the nineteenth century   Rossetti has also a very effective extension of it to seven lines *abbacca* [4]

[1] My dere herte and best beloved fo,
  Why liketh yow to do me al this wo,
    What have I doon that greveth yow, or sayd,
    But for I serve and love yow and no mo ?
    And whilst I lyve I wol ever do so,
      And therefor, swete, ne beth nat yvel apayd
    For so good and so fair as [*that*] *ye be* ⎫
      Hit were right grete wonder but ye hadde ⎪
      Of alle servantes, bothe of goode and badde , ⎬
    And leest worthy of alle hem, I am he ⎭

Not dissimilar suggestions may be found in Dunbar's *Golden Targe*.

[2] We heard how they you hight,
  If they might find that child,
  For to have told you right,
  But certes they are beguiled
  ⎧*Swilk tales are not to trow,*
  ⎨ *Full well wot ilka wight,*
  ⎪ *Thou shall never more have might*
  ⎩*Ne maistery unto you*

[3] Who, as an offering at your shrine,
  Have sung this hymn and here entreat
  One spark of your diviner heat
  To light upon a love of mine

[4] Consider the sea's listless chime,
  Time's self it is, made audible
  The murmur of the earth s own shell—
  Secret continuance sublime
    Is the sea s end , our sight may pass
    No furlong further   Since time was
  This sound hath told the lapse of time
             (*The Sea Limits*)

VI Rʜʏᴍᴇ-Rᴏʏᴀʟ —However much doubt there may be about the directly imitative origin of things like couplets, or even quatrains (which might, and almost certainly would, suggest themselves without pattern), the case is different with such a thing as the permutation of rhyme in a fixed order of sevens *ababbcc*   It may, therefore, be very likely that Chaucer took this from Guillaume de Machault, a slightly older French poet (1284?-1377), with whom he was certainly acquainted   If so, it is unlikely that Machault invented it, though he may have done so , for there is almost every possible cross-arrangement of rhymes in the enormous wealth of French and Provençal lyric from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. But it was certainly not a frequent metre before   On the other hand, Chaucer s *Troilus* made it the most fashionable metre in English throughout the fifteenth century for long narrative poems, and it was splendidly written by Sackville in the mid-sixteenth, but thereafter succumbed to the octave   The last considerable example of it, in the larger Elizabethan period, was the *Leoline and Sydanis* of Sir Francis Kynaston, a great admirer of Chaucer, who actually also translated part of *Troilus* into Latin rhyme-royal. But it was revived in the worthiest fashion by the late Mr William Morris

VII Oᴄᴛᴀᴠᴇ — There are two principal eight-line stanzas of decasyllables used in English   The oldest form, employed by Chaucer, appears to have been derived from the French, as it is certainly used by Deschamps, and may have been by Machault   Here the rhymes are arranged *ababbcbc*   By addition of an Alexandrine this arithmetically makes the Spenserian (*v inf*)   The other—later, but much more largely used—is derived from the Italian *ottava rima*, the rhyme order of which is *abababcc*   This is the kind employed by Fairfax (with great results, though rather in the direction of its final couplet than as a whole) in his translation of Tasso (1600), and (with a comic bent also directly imitated from Italian) by Frere in *The Monks and the Giants*, and (after him) by Byron in *Beppo* and *Don*

Juan   The greatest modern serious employment of it is in Shelley's *Witch of Atlas*

VIII SPENSERIAN —The Spenserian stanza of nine lines—eight decasyllables and an Alexandrine, rhymed *ababbcbcc*—is entirely the invention of Edmund Spenser It is false to say that it was " taken from the Italians " , for there is no such stanza in Italian, and the octave-decasyllabic part of it is rhymed differently from the Italian octave It is irrelevant to say that it is the Chaucerian octave with an Alexandrine added , for it is exactly in the addition of the Alexandrine that the whole essence and the whole beauty of the stanza consist   It is still more irrelevant, though true, to assert that there had been a few attempts (as by More) to add an Alexandrine to other stanzas or to lengthen out their last line into one , for it is of *this* stanza that we are talking, and not of something else   Therefore it is sufficient to say once more that the Spenserian stanza is the invention of Emund Spenser, and one of the greatest inventions known in prosody

IX BURNS METRE —This arrangement is found first in the verse of the Provençal prince, William IX Count of Poitiers (poems about 1090)

> Pus oezem de novelh florir
> Pratz e vergiers reverderir
> Rius e fontanas esclarrir
>   Auras e vens
> Beu deu quas des lo joy jourir
>   Dou es jauzens.

He has it also in a seven-line form, with four instead of three eights to start with , while the shorter variety is repeated in Northern France, as in the beautiful song of " Bele Aeliz "   It appears in one English romance, *Octovian Imperator*, and largely in the Miracle plays , but later seems to have been preserved only in Scotland, where Burns gave it once more world-wide vogue

X OTHER STANZAS —Of the numerous other forms of what some improperly call " irregular verse "—what King James the Sixth (First) showed himself much more of a

Solomon in calling "broken and cuttit," and adding,
"quhairof new formes are daylie inventit according to the
Poetes Pleasour"—it is impossible to give an exhaustive
account, or even to supply a mere list with examples of
the "formes"[1]   It is sufficient to say that when the new
English prosody was in making there were already extensive
patterns of such verse in French and Provençal poetry,
that these were freely imitated and improved upon.   In
the present writer's larger *History* the passages dealing with
the contents of MS Harl 2253, with the Vernon MS, and
with the Miracle plays will be found to contain specifica-
tions of almost every form, and examples of not a few
This liberty continued in the lyrics of the Elizabethan
period in the larger sense, being especially manifested in
the later Elizabethan miscellanies of the time proper, and
in the Caroline poets, but was discontinued in practice, and
frowned upon in principle, during the eighteenth century
It was revived in the nineteenth by the great poets of the
first Romantic period to some extent, but to a much greater
degree by some of their "intermediate" successors, like
Beddoes and Darley, while, from Tennyson and Browning
onward, it has been the delight of almost every poet worthy
of the name to add to the variety

[1] For instance, Coleridge has shown, in the *Ancient Mariner*, that the
ballad or common measure of four lines, 8, 6, 8, 6, *abab*, can be extended
to any number of lines up to *nine* (*v sup* p 97), with the number and
order of each rhyme-end varied to suit, and yet without overrunning, or
loosening the general grip and character of the stanza   Now the smallest
knowledge of mathematics will show the enormous number of combina-
tions—five-, six-, seven-, eight-, and nine-lined with the *a* and *b* rhymes
variously grouped—that would require tabulation even up to this limit
And it would argue utter insensibility to the qualities and capacities of
English poetry to deny that, on the morrow of this classification, a poet
might arise who would give the same solid effect to *ten* or more lines
with still more endlessly varied rhyme-permutation   Instead, therefore,
of attempting a hopeless and even mischievous task (for these classifica-
tions always generate the idea that whatsoever is outside of them is bad),
it has seemed better to lay down, and to illustrate largely and variously,
the principles on which all such legitimate combinations have been formed
hitherto, but on which they may legitimately be formed anew *ad infinitum*
And this, it is hoped, has been done sufficiently here.

CHAPTER IV

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(THE following list contains almost everything with which any student, who is not making the subject one of exhaustive and practically original research, need make himself acquainted, while it will carry him pretty far even in that direction Further information will be found in the works of Mr T S Omond, *English Metrists* ('Tunbridge Wells, 1903), and *English Metrists of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford and London, 1907), as well as in the present writer's larger *History of English Prosody* Several of the works hereinafter catalogued will be found collected in Professor Gregory Smith's *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (2 vols, Oxford, 1904), and extracts from not a very few of them in the present writer's *Loci Critici* (Boston, U S A, and London, 1903))

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